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# **HAMLET**

by  
**WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE**

Edited by  
**ADRIAN ALINGTON**

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## CONTENTS

	PAGE
Introduction	vii
<i>Hamlet</i>	1
Notes	137
Appendix	
1. The Life of Shakespeare,	167
2. The Order of the Plays	168
3. The Elizabethan Theatre	169
Questions on the Text	175
Essay Questions	178



## INTRODUCTION

THE first certain mention of Shakespeare's tragedy of *Hamlet* is to be found in the Stationers' Register of July 26, 1602, where it is entered to James Roberts, and noted as having been recently acted by the company known as the Lord Chamberlain's servants. It is probable that it was written not long before that date. The text, as we know it, is based upon two versions, known as the Quarto of 1604 and the Folio of 1623. There are important differences in the versions, which have aroused much discussion, but which need not concern us here. There is also an earlier Quarto of 1603, with a very imperfect text.

As in the case of nearly all his plays, Shakespeare did not trouble to invent his own plot. The Hamlet story is an old Danish one. It is to be found for the first time in the work of a certain Danish historian, by name Saxo, who wrote in Latin somewhere near the beginning of the thirteenth century. In this early version the hero is known as Amleth, and he seems to have had little enough in common with Shakespeare's subtle and complex prince. Amleth, in assuming madness, crows like a cock, flaps his arms like wings, and later, when he has killed the character who corresponds to Shakespeare's Polonius, dismembers his body, boils it and flings it to the pigs. At the conclusion of the story he makes the courtiers drunk, sets

## INTRODUCTION

fire to the palace, and kills his uncle with the sword. The story was later translated into French, and probably it was in its French version that it originally reached England. Shakespeare was not, however, even the first man to dramatise Hamlet. An earlier play, generally believed to be the work of Thomas Kyd, who wrote *The Spanish Tragedy*, can be traced from contemporary allusions. This, though it has been lost, seems to have been an old-fashioned, blood-thirsty "revenge" play, and we read of "ye Ghost which cried so miserably at ye Theater like an oyster wife, 'Hamlet, revenge !'"

What Shakespeare in his genius did was to take the bare bones of this old bloodthirsty tale of murder and revenge and fashion from it perhaps the greatest, certainly the most famous, tragedy in our language, the lines of which have long since passed into the current stuff of the English tongue, and which is still being read, annotated and acted all over the world. Under his hand the story ceases to be merely a shocker. We are shown the tremendous and awe-inspiring spectacle of a human soul in the merciless grip of Circumstance. And we are shown more than that, for, as in all Shakespeare's full-scale tragedies—unlike those of the Greeks, who loved to picture heroic and noble persons as the sport of indiscriminating Destiny—the seeds of the tragedy are within. Hamlet is to a very great extent the victim of his own character. As he did with Othello and Macbeth, Shakespeare surrounds Hamlet with just the set of circumstance which to one of his character would prove fatal. Passionate Othello would have slain Claudius without a moment's hesitation. Subtle Hamlet would never have accepted blindly the story of Desdemona's un-

## INTRODUCTION

faithfulness. And so with both, while we are sensible of the dark and malignant workings of Fate in the background, we feel that Fate is not striking blindly, but that each great figure is contributing to his own downfall.

Hamlet's delay in killing Claudius, which is the cause of so many tragic events, springs from the very stuff of Hamlet's character, and becomes thus the pith and kernel of the tragedy. In fact, as Professor Dover Wilson has pointed out, if you remove Hamlet's series of soliloquies bodily there is no reason for delay in the play at all. Did Shakespeare, the poet and the actor, seize upon the old story as a suitable vehicle for a character already gloriously living in his mind, or did he, in trying to fill out the bare bones of his plot and account satisfactorily for the persistent delay, stumble, almost as it were accidentally, across the immortal conception of Hamlet?

### *Hamlet.*

It is related that a certain countryman, visiting London, attended a famous actor's performance of *Hamlet* in search of an evening's entertainment. At the end of the first act he turned, bewildered, to his neighbour and inquired, "Does that young man in black come on much more?" On being told that he was, in fact, the principal character in the play, the countryman instantly arose and left the theatre.

This attitude is fortunately rare. (Hamlet, I suppose, has fascinated, as well as baffled, mankind to a greater extent than any other figure in literature.) Immense discussion and dissension have raged round his character. All manner of theories have been evolved and supported by elaborate and scholarly

## INTRODUCTION

argument. Hamlet was mad before the play begins, Hamlet was a ramshackle play-acting neurotic, Hamlet was a feeble and irresolute dreamer, or an ascetic of mighty intellect, in either case constitutionally incapable of action. It has even been quaintly suggested that he was a woman disguised, in love with Horatio.

Is it, indeed, possible completely to understand Hamlet? Did Shakespeare himself really understand him, or say in his own mind that he was this or that? Probably not. Shakespeare was an actor and a poet; he was not a commentator upon his own works. Very likely as he worked, inspired, pouring beauty, breathing life into the ramshackle old story he had picked up, he identified himself more and more completely with his own imaginary character. His own thoughts, emotions and instincts went to the making of Hamlet. In consequence Hamlet is so real, so alive, that it is impossible to analyse his character completely, as it is to analyse that of our neighbours. How seldom in real life do two people agree completely about a third! To everyone, too, who reads the play, Hamlet by his very nature suggests something of himself, some hidden mood, some secret thought or weakness. It is significant that, when a few years ago Hamlet was acted in modern costume, the self-tortures of a youthful post-War prince in plus-fours were no whit less vital than those of the traditional young man in black.

Let us look at the play itself and see what it tells us. Hamlet is, if we are to believe the grave-digger, a young man of thirty years of age. Though introspective and an idealist, there is no suggestion that by nature he is either a milksop or a neurotic. On the contrary, he was respected by the people, even

## INTRODUCTION

though he had been deprived of the throne, had good honest friends, like Horatio, and in the very last speech of the play Fortinbras speaks of him as “ likely to have proved most royally.”) He was no coward—at no time does he show a lack of physical courage—nor is he cursed with any sense of his own inferiority ; indeed, with those he dislikes or mistrusts—Polonius, Osric, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern—he is distinctly imperious and caustic. What, then, is the reason of his fatal irresolution?

When the play opens Hamlet has just suffered a very severe shock. Not only has he lost a beloved father and been cheated of his inheritance by his uncle, but—worst shock of all—he has seen his mother, whom he worshipped, married with indecent haste to his treacherous and drunken uncle. And it must be remembered that in Denmark at this time to marry your brother-in-law was unlawful ; so that in Hamlet’s eyes the marriage was no true marriage. In consequence, as his first soliloquy shows, he has been thrown into a state of profound melancholy and disgust with life. His ideals are shattered, his love for Ophelia soured by his discovery of woman’s frailty. He cares for nothing, and even toys with the idea of suicide. In short, it is the worst possible moment at which he could be called upon to perform a desperate action.

The time is out of joint : O cursed spite!  
That ever I was born to set it right !

It is noticeable that even at the moment of almost hysterical excitement which follows the revelation of the Ghost this thought strikes him and he uses these

## INTRODUCTION

words : knowing his own nature and abnormal state of mind, he foresees his own fatal irresolution.

Two months have elapsed between the Ghost's appearance and the beginning of the second Act, and Hamlet has achieved nothing except to implant in the minds of those about him the idea of his madness which he hopes may act as a shield to anything he may do. He has done nothing practical and continues to do nothing, though the thought of the solemn duty laid upon him is never absent from his mind. He explains his inaction partly by doubts about the genuineness of the Ghost, but whether he really feels these doubts, or whether they are excuses, consciously or unconsciously invented to justify himself, we do not know. In any case his conscience is continually pricked. The Player's speech with its simulated grief leads him to upbraid himself bitterly, as though to say, "I really must do something about this revenge business."

Is it so very difficult to grasp Hamlet's state of mind? Imagine yourself faced with some acutely distasteful task which you know you must perform. You put it off, inventing for your own benefit some plausible excuse for delay, and after that it becomes increasingly easy to put it off. And yet you can never escape from the thought of the thing to be done ; however much you try to distract your thoughts, it is there all the time like a grey shadow at the back of your mind. In time it begins to look as though you would never accomplish the task : through much "thinking upon the event" the difficulties seem insuperable. The thought of failure weighs upon your mind and nerves until your will becomes paralysed. You can do nothing. And yet what a relief if it were

## INTRODUCTION

done, the grey shadow lifted ! That, surely, greatly magnified, is the process through which Hamlet goes,

He delays, and the inevitable tragedy looms nearer. And yet all the time—and this surely is perfectly consistent—though his will seems paralysed, he is capable of sudden impulsive action when roused from his brooding lethargy. The arrival of the players gives him an idea. He will prove once and for all the fact of the King's guilt. This is action of a sort anyway ; even though it is not the supreme action enjoined upon him by his father's ghost, he flatters himself that it is a step towards it. His plan succeeds and he is wrought up to a high pitch of excitement. He will take the Ghost's word for a thousand pounds. And then—almost immediately afterwards—he is brooding again, apparently incapable of action.

He has a chance to kill Claudius. Why does he not do it ? Is the idea that Claudius, being still at his prayers, will go to heaven but another excuse ? It seems so. “ Now I might do it,” he says, not “ Now I will do it.” Nor, when the Ghost presently appears to reprove him for his almost blunted purpose, does he try to justify himself. He lets his opportunity slip. And yet but a short while afterwards he actually slays Polonius, thinking that it is the King behind the arras. Excitement has once again momentarily broken down the paralysis which holds him. He acts. Alas, that his victim should have been merely the old “ rash, intruding fool ” !

Hamlet's failure to kill the King at prayer is the turning point of the play. Had he slain Claudius then, and won the ear of the people, as Laertes did later, all might have been well for everyone, save the villainous Claudius. But he lets opportunity slip.

## INTRODUCTION

Thereafter in quick succession one woe treads upon another's heels.

Hamlet himself is hurriedly sent away to England, an expedition from which the King does not intend that he shall return. Upon his way he encounters Fortinbras and his army on the march. Once again, as in the case of the Player's speech, the sight of their activity awakes in him a mood of bitter self-reproach. They are ready to face death for a "fantasy and trick of fame," while he . . . Though much has happened in between, the tenor of his thoughts here is exactly the same as in his soliloquy which closes Act II. He has moved no nearer to accomplishing his purpose. Though he tells himself in a flash of vigour that henceforward his thoughts must be bloody or nothing worth, we have begun to doubt by now whether he really believes in his own determination.

Upon this characteristic note Hamlet disappears for a short time from the action, while back in Elsinore events move swiftly towards the culminating tragedy. Ophelia goes mad and is drowned ; Laertes, learning from the King that it is Hamlet who is the cause of his misfortunes, is hot for revenge. When news comes of Hamlet's escape and return, he enters with the King into a plot to compass his death.

And so to the final Act. Hamlet is back again in Denmark, to face a situation full of peril. During his absence he has shown plenty of activity ; he has skilfully contrived to upset the King's plot against his life, he has joined vigorously in a battle with the pirates. Surely now he will stick to the decision which the sight of Fortinbras' army awoke in him ? Surely now he will be swift and desperate ? But no. With regard to that one action, it seems, he cannot

## INTRODUCTION

throw off the fatal paralysis; . perhaps, too, the atmosphere of Denmark and the court, with its associations of former failure, helps to throw him back into his old state of mind. Though dangers surround him on all sides, we find him moping and philosophising in a graveyard, as though glad of any opportunity to distract his thoughts from the supreme matter in hand. Though he gives way to a single savage outburst of rage and grief, on learning of Ophelia's death, his frenzy soon passes. In the very last scene, but a few minutes before Osric enters with the news of the proposed fencing match, the fatal indecision is still upon him. He is arguing with Horatio, or rather with himself in Horatio's presence, whether he is justified in "quitting" the King "with this arm." Indeed, by this time a kind of hopelessness seems to have settled upon him, a feeling that he himself has no longer a hand in the matter, but that Fate will have its way.

There's a divinity [he says to Horatio] that  
shapes our ends,  
Rough-hew them how we will.

And again a little later, " There is a special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come ; if it be not to come, it will be now."

So the Court enters to watch the fencing match.

Hamlet dies, one of several victims of his own irresolution. And in the moment of death, when all the terrible consequences, which might have been avoided, have duly followed, he accomplishes his purpose. Ironically enough in death he is treated as a soldier and a man of action., Fortinbras gives orders that for his passage

## INTRODUCTION

The soldiers' music and the rites of war  
Speak loudly for him.

Thus in military fashion he is borne from our view.  
And we, closing the book or leaving the theatre, are  
left awed, pondering, like Hamlet himself, upon the  
dark mysteries of Destiny and the human heart, and  
how far these two are one and the same. \

### *Other Characters.*

Hamlet himself dominates the play so entirely that the phrase “ Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark ” has become proverbial as indicating an absurdity. Since the enemy against whom he is struggling is to a great extent within himself, it follows that the play contains no rival character of the stature of Iago or Lady Macbeth. All the other persons of the play are subordinated to the central figure ; indeed, we watch their behaviour largely through Hamlet’s eyes.

### *The King.*

King Claudius is not one of Shakespeare’s big-scale villains. Though perhaps not altogether so loathsome a creature as Hamlet thought him, he is a drunkard and a man of mean, treacherous, hypocritical and selfish nature. He murdered his brother by the meanest kind of stealth, and on every occasion his first thoughts are for his own safety. When he hears of Polonius’s death, his immediate reaction is thankfulness that Polonius and not himself was concealed behind the arras. If we are to judge by Hamlet’s description (“ one may smile, and smile, and be a villain ”), he seems to have been an oily scoundrel,

## INTRODUCTION

clever at ingratiating himself. Evidently he achieved this with his subjects, for though they made "mows" at him while his brother was alive, they were ready to buy his miniature when he became king. He was able, too, with ease to twist Laertes round his little finger. On the other hand, to say something in his favour, he does seem to have inspired a genuine affection in his wife, and on the occasion on which Laertes raises the people and the situation looks threatening he behaves with courage. As a monarch, too, in his less convivial hours, he appears to have been not inefficient. But, on the whole, there seems little reason to disagree with Hamlet's unflattering view of him.

### *The Queen.*

Queen Gertrude is a mean and shallow character, though there seems no reason to suppose, as some have done, that she was privy to the murder of her first husband. The murder is never spoken of between herself and Claudius when they are alone, and she does not share his alarm at the climax of the play scene. She is not so much an evil woman as a gross, lazy and superficial one, though she seems certainly to have had affection for her son, and he for the most part treats her with respect. The knowledge that he is his brother's murderer apparently makes no difference in her feeling towards Claudius : but whether this was due to strong affection or indifference to his crime is uncertain.

### *Ophelia.*

Ophelia wanders through the play, an innocent, pathetic figure. Even her madness is made pathetic

## INTRODUCTION

rather than tragic—her babbling in insanity is all of flowers—and when she is drowned it happens in a charmingly pitiful manner. Shakespeare, the craftsman, of course, sought this effect deliberately, for the love motif is not the most important part of the tragedy ; he did not want a second strong tragic figure. Ophelia has been blamed for a weak nincompoop who allows herself to be drawn into the plot against Hamlet and loses her reason at the first sign of trouble, but this is surely a little harsh. She has been jealously shielded from the world by Polonius and Laertes and trusts them implicitly ; she genuinely believes that she is doing what is best for Hamlet in helping to discover the cause of his madness. As for her own madness—she has lost, almost at a single stroke, the three people who alone matter to her, Polonius dead, Laertes abroad, Hamlet insane and sent to England. She is terribly alone, face to face for the first time in her sheltered life with naked tragedy ; moreover, she believes that it is she herself who is unwittingly the cause of the disasters which seem to be crowding upon those about her. There is no one to disillusion or comfort her. We need not, I think, assume that the fact that her brain gave way is a sign that it was originally weak. She was merely very young, very innocent and completely inexperienced.

### *Polonius.*

Polonius is drawn deliberately as a comic character, and he has come to typify with his pompousness, his long-windedness and his determination to meddle, the garrulous, self-satisfied old bore, not unknown in high places.

## INTRODUCTION

### *Laertes.*

Laertes, though inheriting his father's unfortunate tendency to hand out platitudinous advice, and though apparently fond of a gay life in Paris, is nevertheless a man of action. His behaviour after Polonius's death throws Hamlet's irresolution into strong relief. Shakespeare, incidentally, in this scene cleverly contrives to indicate how easy it would have been for Hamlet to raise the Danes against Claudius. But nevertheless—here again Shakespeare shows his supreme skill as a craftsman—our sympathies cannot even in his bereavements lie with Laertes at Hamlet's expense. Almost immediately he joins with Claudius in the foul plot against Hamlet's life. His final speech, too, in which he throws all the blame on the King, shows a mean and deceitful nature.

### *Horatio.*

Horatio, honest, well-balanced soul, is something more than a mere foil to Hamlet. Amid all the surrounding treachery he is the one true friend that Hamlet has, and Hamlet in consequence wears his fellow-student in "his heart of heart." He is, also, the only character in the play, apart from Hamlet himself, with whom Shakespeare is in sympathy. Shakespeare himself, perhaps, like Hamlet, delighted in the company of such a man as Horatio, so unlike yet so complementary to his own nature.

### *The Ghost.*

The Ghost is clearly intended to be an objective vision (if this is not a contradiction in terms) visible to all. It is no mere hallucination or product of Hamlet's subconscious mind. Though in these times some

## INTRODUCTION

of the ghost scenes may seem to have about them a faintly comic flavour, in the sixteenth and seventeenth century practically everyone believed in ghosts. To an Elizabethan audience its appearance would have been impressive, even alarming. A certain amount of controversy raged, too, about the nature of ghosts, and Hamlet's doubts as to the authenticity of the message he had received may have been genuine.

A. A.

# HAMLET

## DRAMATIS PERSONAE

CLAUDIUS, king of Denmark.	Players,
HAMLET, son to the late, and nephew to the present king.	Two Clowns, grave-diggers.
POLONIUS, lord chamberlain.	FORTINBRAS, prince of Norway.
HORATIO, friend to Hamlet.	A Captain.
LAERTES, son to Polonius.	English Ambassadors.
VOLTIMAND CORNELIUS ROSENCRANTZ GUILDENSTERN OSRIC A Gentleman A Priest. MARCELLUS BERNARDO FRANCISCO, a soldier. REYNALDO, servant to Polonius.	courtiers. officers. Lords, Ladies, Officers, Soldiers, Sailors, Messengers, and other Attendants.
	Ghost of Hamlet's Father.
	SCENE : <i>Denmark.</i>

## ACT I

SCENE I. *Elsinore. A platform before the castle.*  
FRANCISCO at his post. Enter to him BERNARDO.

Ber. Who's there ?

Fran. Nay, answer me : stand, and unfold yourself.

Ber. Long live the king !

Fran. Bernardo ?

Ber. He.

Fran. You come most carefully upon your hour.

Ber. 'Tis now struck twelve ; get thee to bed,  
Francisco.

Fran. For this relief much thanks : 'tis bitter cold,  
And I am sick at heart.

Ber. Have you had quiet guard ?

Fran. Not a mouse stirring.

Ber. Well, good night.

If you do meet Horatio and Marcellus,  
The rivals of my watch, bid them make haste.

Fran. I think I hear them. Stand, ho ! Who's  
there ?

Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS.

Hor. Friends to this ground.

Mar. And liegemen to the Dane.

Fran. Give you good night.

Mar. O, farewell, honest soldier :  
Who hath relieved you ?

## HAMLET

[ACT I]

*Fran.*                           Bernardo has my place.  
Give you good night.               [Exit.]

*Mar.* Holla ! Bernardo !

*Ber.* Say,

What, is Horatio there?

*Hor.* A piece of him. 19

Ber. Welcome, Horatio : welcomc, good Marcellus.

*Mar.* What, has this thing  
*Ber.* I have seen nothing.

*Mar.* Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy,  
And will not let belief take hold of him  
Touching this dreaded sight, twice seen of us :  
Therefore I have entreated him along  
With us to watch the minutes of this night ;  
That if again this apparition come,  
He may approve our eyes and speak to it.

*Hor.* Tush, tush, 'twill not appear.

*Ber.* Sit down awhile;  
And let us once again assail your ears, 31  
That are so fortified against our story,  
What we have two nights seen.

*Hor.* Well, sit we down,  
And let us hear Bernardo speak of this.

*Ber.* Last night of all,  
When yond same star that's westward from the pole  
Had made his course to illumé that part of heaven  
Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself,  
The bell then beating one,—

*Enter Ghost.*

*Mar.* Peace, break thee off ; look, where it comes again !

*Ber.* In the same figure, like the king that's dead.

*Mar.* Thou art a scholar ; speak to it, Horatio.

*Ber.* Looks it not like the king ? mark it, Horatio.

*Hor.* Most like : it harrows me with fear and wonder.

*Ber.* It would be spoke to.

*Mar.* Question it, Horatio.

*Hor.* What art thou that usurp'st this time of night,  
Together with that fair and warlike form  
In which the majesty of buried Denmark  
Did sometimes march ? by heaven I charge thee,  
speak !

*Mar.* It is offended.

*Ber.* See, it stalks away ! 50

*Hor.* Stay ! speak, speak ! I charge thee, speak !

[*Exit Ghost.*

*Mar.* 'Tis gone, and will not answer.

*Ber.* How now, Horatio ! you tremble and look pale :

Is not this something more than fantasy ?

What think you on't ?

*Hor.* Before my God, I might not this believe  
Without the sensible and true avouch  
Of mine own eyes.

*Mar.* Is it not like the king ?

*Hor.* As thou art to thyself :

Such was the very armour he had on , *struggl* 60  
When he the ambitious Norway combated ;  
So frown'd he once, when, in an angry parl  
He smote the sledded Polacks on the ice.

'Tis strange. *The parl exactly*

*Mar.* Thus twice before, and jump at this dead hour,  
With martial stalk hath he gone by our watch.

*Hor.* In what particular thought to work I know not ;

But in the gross and scope of my opinion,

This bodes some strange eruption to our state.

*Mar.* Good now, sit down, and tell me, he that  
knows, <sup>↑</sup> ~~has~~ 70

Why this same strict and most observant watch  
So nightly toils the subjects of the land,  
And why such daily cast of brazen cannon,  
And foreign mart for implements of war ;  
Why such ~~x~~impress of shipwrights, whose sore task  
Does not divide the Sunday from the week ;  
What might be toward, that this sweaty haste  
Doth make the night joint-labourer with the day :  
Who is't that can inform me ?

*Hor.* That can I ;  
At least, the whisper goes so. Our last king, 80  
Whose image even but now appear'd to us,  
Was, as you know, by Fortinbras of Norway,  
There ~~to~~ prick'd on by a most emulate pride,  
Dared to the combat ; in which our valiant Hamlet—  
For so this side of our known world esteem'd him—  
Did slay this Fortinbras ; who, by a seal'd compact,  
Well ratified by law and heraldry,  
Did forfeit, with his life, all those his lands  
Which he stood seized of, to the conqueror :  
Against the which, a moiety competent 90  
Was gaged by our king ; which had return'd  
To the inheritance of Fortinbras,  
Had he been vanquisher ; as, by the same covenant,  
And carriage of the article design'd,  
His fell to Hamlet. Now, sir, young Fortinbras,  
Of unimproved ~~mettle~~ hot and full,  
Hath in the skirts of Norway here and there  
Shark'd up a list of lawless resolutes,  
For food and diet, to some enterprise  
That hath a stomach in't ; which is no other— 100

As it doth well appear unto our state—  
 But to recover of us, by strong hand  
 And terms compulsative, those foresaid lands  
 So by his father lost : and this, I take it,  
Is the main motive of our preparations,  
 The source of this our watch and the chief head  
 Of this post-haste and romage in the land. ¶

*Ber.* I think it be no other but e'en so :  
Well may it sort that this portentous figure  
 Comes armed through our watch ; so like the king  
 That was and is the question of these wars.      111

*Hor.* A mote it is to trouble the mind's eye.  
 In the most high and palmy state of Rome,  
A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,  
 The graves stood tenantless and the sheeted dead  
 Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets :  
 As stars with trains of fire and dews of blood,  
 Disasters in the sun ; and the moist star ~~in~~ <sup>in</sup>  
 Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands  
 Was sick almost to doomsday with eclipse :  
 And even the like precurse of fierce events,  
 As harbingers preceding still the fates,  
 And prologue to the omen coming on,  
 Have heaven and earth together demonstrated  
 Unto our climatures and countrymen.—  
 But soft, behold ! lo, where it comes again !

*Re-enter Ghost.*

I'll cross it, though it blast me. Stay, illusion !  
 If thou hast any sound, or use of voice,  
 Speak to me :  
 If there be any good thing to be done,      130  
 That may to thee do ease and grace to me,  
 Speak to me :

[Cock crows.]

If thou art privy to thy country's fate,  
 Which, happily, foreknowing may avoid, *W<sup>m</sup> d<sup>r</sup> d<sup>r</sup>*  
 O, speak ! *b<sup>t</sup> c<sup>t</sup> b<sup>t</sup>*

Or if thou hast uphoarded in thy life  
 Extorted treasure in the womb of earth,  
 For which, they say, you spirits oft walk in death,  
 Speak of it : stay, and speak ! Stop it, Marcellus.

*Mar.* Shall I strike it with my partisan ? *... and 140*

*Hor.* Do, if it will not stand.

*Ber.* 'Tis here !

*Hor.* 'Tis here !

*Mar.* 'Tis gone ! *[Exit Ghost.*

We do it wrong, being so majestical,  
 To offer it the show of violence ;  
 For it is, as the air, invulnerable,  
 And our vain blows malicious mockery.

*Ber.* It was about to speak when the cock crew.

*Hor.* And then it started like a guilty thing  
 Upon a fearful summons. I have heard,  
 The cock, that is the trumpet to the morn, *150*  
 Doth with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat  
 Awake the god of day ; and, at his warning,  
 Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air,  
 The extravagant and erring spirit hies  
 To his confine : and of the truth herein  
 This present object made probation.

*Mar.* It faded on the crowing of the cock.  
 Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes  
 Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,  
 The bird of dawning singeth all night long : *160*  
 And then, they say, no spirit dare stir abroad ;  
 The nights are wholesome ; then no planets strike,  
 No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm,  
 So hallow'd and so gracious is the time.

*Hor.* So have I heard and do in part believe it.  
But, look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,  
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill :  
Break we our watch up ; and by my advice,  
Let us impart what we have seen to-night  
Unto young Hamlet ; for, upon my life,      170  
This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him.  
Do you consent we shall acquaint him with it,  
As needful in our loves, fitting our duty ?

*Mar.* Let's do't, I pray ; and I this morning know  
Where we shall find him most conveniently. [Exeunt.

SCENE II. *A room of state in the castle.* Enter the KING,  
QUEEN, HAMLET, POLONIUS, LAERTES, VOLTMAND,  
CORNELIUS, Lords, and Attendants.

*King.* Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's  
death  
The memory be green, and that it us befitted  
To bear our hearts in grief and our whole kingdom  
To be contracted in one brow of woe,  
Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature  
That we with wisest sorrow think on him,  
Together with remembrance of ourselves.  
Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen,  
The imperial jointress to this warlike state  
Have we, as 'twere with a defeated joy,—      180  
With an auspicious and a dropping eye,  
With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage,  
In equal scale weighing delight and dole,—  
Taken to wife : nor have we herein barr'd      190  
Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone  
With this affair along. For all, our thanks.  
Now follows, that you know, young Fortinbras,

Holding a weak supposal of our worth,  
 Or thinking by our late dear brother's death  
 Our state to be disjoint and out of frame,  
 Colleagued with the dream of his advantage,  
 He hath not fail'd to pester us with message,  
 Importing the surrender of those lands  
 Lost by his father, with all bonds of law,  
 To our most valiant brother. So much for him.

20

Now for ourself and for this time of meeting :  
 Thus much the business is : we have here writ  
 To Norway, uncle of young Fortinbras,—  
 Who, impotent and bed-rid, scarcely hears  
 Of this his nephew's purpose,—to suppress  
 His further gait herein ; in that the levies,  
 The lists and full proportions, are all made  
 Out of his subject : and we here dispatch  
 You, good Cornelius, and you, Voltimand,  
 For bearers of this greeting to old Norway ;  
 Giving to you no further personal power  
 To business with the king, more than the scope  
 Of these dilated articles allow. ~~and~~  
 Farewell, and let your haste commend your duty. 39

30

*Cor.* } In that and all things will we show our duty.  
*Vol.* }  
*King.* We doubt it nothing : heartily farewell.

[*Exeunt Voltimand and Cornelius.*

And now, Laertes, what's the news with you ?  
 You told us of some suit ; what is't, Laertes ?  
 You cannot speak of reason to the Dane,  
 And lose your voice : what wouldst thou beg, Laertes,  
 That shall not be my offer, not thy asking ?  
 The head is not more native to the heart,  
 The hand more instrumental to the mouth,  
 Than is the throne of Denmark to thy father.

What wouldest thou have, Laertes ?

*Laer.* My dread lord,  
Your leave and favour to return to France ; 51  
 From whence though willingly I came to Denmark,  
 To show my duty in your coronation, *After this*  
 Yet now, I must confess, that duty done,  
 My thoughts and wishes bend again toward France  
 And bow them to your gracious leave and pardon.

*King.* Have you your father's leave ? What says Polonius ?

*Pol.* He hath, my lord, wrung from me my slow leave  
 By laboursome petition, and at last  
 Upon his will I seal'd my hard consent : 60  
 I do beseech you, give him leave to go.

*King.* Take thy fair hour, Laertes ; time be thine,  
 And thy best graces spend it at thy will !  
 But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son,—

*Ham.* [Aside] A little more than kin, and less than kind.  
*King.* How is it that the clouds still hang on you ?  
*Ham.* Not so, my lord ; I am too much i' the sun.  
*Queen.* Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted colour off,  
 And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.  
 Do not for ever with thy vailed lids

Seek for thy noble father in the dust :  
 Thou know'st 'tis common ; all that lives must die,  
 Passing through nature to eternity.

*Ham.* Ay, madam, it is common.

*Queen.* If it be,  
 Why seems it so particular with thee ?

*Ham.* Seems, madam ! nay, it is ; I know not  
 " seems." *black* *bl*  
 'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,

## HAMLET

Nor customary suits of solemn black,  
Nor windy suspiration of forced breath,  
No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,  
Nor the dejected 'haviour of the visage,  
Together with all forms, modes, shapes of grief,  
That can denote me truly : these indeed seem,  
For they are actions that a man might play :  
But I have that within which passeth show ;  
These but the trappings and the suits of woe.

80

*King.* 'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature,  
Hamlet,  
To give these mourning duties to your father :  
But, you must know, your father lost a father ;  
That father lost, lost his ; and the survivor bound 90  
In filial obligation for some term  
To do obsequious sorrow : but to persever  
In obstinate condolement is a course  
Of impious stubbornness ; 'tis unmanly grief ;  
It shows a will most incorrect to heaven,  
A heart unfortified, a mind impatient,  
An understanding simple and unschool'd :  
For what we know must be, and is as common  
As any the most vulgar thing to sense,  
Why should we in our peevish opposition 100  
Take it to heart ? Fie ! 'tis a fault to heaven,  
A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,  
To reason most absurd ; whose common theme  
Is death of fathers, and who still hath cried,  
From the first corse till he that died to-day,  
" This must be so." We pray you, throw to earth  
This unprevailing woe, and think of us  
As of a father : for let the world take note,  
You are the most immediate to our throne ;  
And with no less nobility of love 110

100

110

Than that which dearest father bears his son,  
 Do I impart toward you. For your intent  
In going back to school in Wittenberg,  
It is most retrograde to our desire :  
 And we beseech you, bend you to remain  
 Here, in the cheer and comfort of our eye,  
 Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son.

*Queen.* Let not thy mother lose her prayers, Hamlet :  
 I pray thee, stay with us ; go not to Wittenberg.

*Ham.* I shall in all my best obey you, madam. 120

*King.* Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply :  
 Be as ourself in Denmark. Madam, come ;  
 This gentle and unforced accord of Hamlet  
 Sits smiling to my heart : in grace whereof,  
 No jocund health that Denmark drinks to-day,  
 But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell,  
 And the king's rouse the heavens shall bruit again,  
 Re-speaking earthly thunder. Come away.

[*Exeunt all but Hamlet.*]

*Ham.* O, that this too too solid flesh would melt,  
 Thaw and resolve itself into a dew ! 130  
 Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd  
 His canon 'gainst self-slaughter ! O God ! God !  
 How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable,  
 Seem to me all the uses of this world !  
 Fie on 't ! ah fie ! 'tis an unweeded garden,  
That grows to seed ; things rank and gross in nature  
Possess it merely. That it should come to this !  
 But two months dead : nay, not so much, not two :  
 So excellent a king ; that was, to this,  
 Hyperion to a satyr ; so loving to my mother 140  
 That he might not beteem the winds of heaven  
 Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth !  
 Must I remember ? why, she would hang on him,

As if increase of appetite had grown  
 By what it fed on : and yet, within a month  
 Let me not think on't—Frailty, thy name is woman !  
 A little month, or ere those shoes were old  
 With which she follow'd my poor father's body,  
 Like Niobe, all tears :—why she, even she—  
 O God ! a beast, that wants discourse of reason, 150  
 Would have mourn'd longer—married with my uncle,  
 My father's brother, but no more like my father  
 Than I to Hercules : within a month :  
 Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears  
 Had left the flushing in her galled eyes, <sup>and</sup>  
 She married. O, most wicked speed, to post  
 With such dexterity to incestuous sheets !  
 It is not nor it cannot come to good :  
 But break, my heart ; for I must hold my tongue.

*Enter HORATIO, MARCELLUS, and BERNARDO.*

*Hor.* Hail to your lordship !  
*Ham.* I am glad to see you well : 160  
 Horatio,—or do I forget myself.  
*Hor.* The same, my lord, and your poor servant  
 ever.  
*Ham.* Sir, my good friend ; I'll change that name  
 with you :  
 And what make you from Wittenberg, Horatio ?  
*Marcellus* ?  
*Mar.* My good lord—  
*Ham.* I am very glad to see you. Good even, sir.  
 But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg ?  
*Hor.* A truant disposition, good my lord.  
*Ham.* I would not hear your enemy say so, 170  
 Nor shall you do mine ear that violence,  
 To make it truster of your own report

Against yourself : I know you are no truant.  
But what is your affair in Elsinore ?

We'll teach you to drink deep ere you depart.

*Hor.* My lord, I came to see your father's funeral.

*Ham.* I pray thee, do not mock me, fellow-student;  
I think it was to see my mother's wedding.

*Hor.* Indeed, my lord, it follow'd hard upon.

*Ham.* Thrift, thrift, Horatio ! the funeral baked  
meats

180

Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.

Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven

Or ever I had seen that day, Horatio !

My father !—methinks I see my father.

*Hor.* Where, my lord ?

*Ham.* In my mind's eye, Horatio.

*Hor.* I saw him once ; he was a goodly king.

*Ham.* He was a man, take him for all in all,  
I shall not look upon his like again.

*Hor.* My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.

*Ham.* Saw ? who ?

190

*Hor.* My lord, the king your father.

*Ham.* The king my father !

*Hor.* Season your admiration for a while  
With an attent ear, till I may deliver,  
Upon the witness of these gentlemen,  
This marvel to you.

*Ham.* For God's love, let me hear.

*Hor.* Two nights together had these gentlemen,  
Marcellus and Bernardo, on their watch,  
In the dead vast and middle of the night,

Been thus encounter'd. A figure like your father,

Armed at point exactly, cap-a-pe,

200

Appears before them, and with solemn march

Goes slow and stately by them : thrice he walk'd

By their oppress'd and fear-surprised eyes,  
 Within his truncheon's length ; whilst they, distill'd  
 Almost to jelly with the act of fear,  
 Stand dumb and speak not to him. This to me  
 In dreadful secrecy impart they did ;  
 And I with them the third night kept the watch :  
 Where, as they had deliver'd, both in time,  
 Form of the thing, each word made true and good, 210  
The apparition comes : I knew your father ;  
 These hands are not more like.

*Ham.* But where was this ?

*Mar.* My lord, upon the platform where we watch'd.

*Ham.* Did you not speak to it ?

*Hor.* My lord, I did ;

But answer made it none : yet once methought  
 It lifted up it head and did address  
 Itself to motion, like as it would speak ;  
 But even then the morning cock crew loud,  
 And at the sound it shrunk in haste away,  
 And vanish'd from our sight.

*Ham.* 'Tis very strange. 220

*Hor.* As I do live, my honour'd lord, 'tis true ;  
 And we did think it writ down in our duty  
 To let you know of it.

*Ham.* Indeed, indeed, sirs, but this troubles me.  
 Hold you the watch to-night ?

*Mar.* } We do, my lord.  
*Ber.* }

*Ham.* Arm'd, say you ?

*Mar.* } Arm'd, my lord.  
*Ber.* }

*Ham.* From top to toe ?

*Mar.* } My lord, from head to foot.  
*Ber.* }

*Ham.* Then saw you not his face?

*Hor.* O, yes, my lord ; he wore his beaver up.

*Ham.* What, look'd he frowningly ?

*Hor.* A countenance more in sorrow than in anger. 230

*Ham.* Pale or red ?

*Hor.* Nay, very pale.

*Ham.* And fix'd his eyes upon you?

*Hor.* Most constantly.

*Ham.* I would I had been there.

*Hor.* It would have much amazed you.

*Ham.* Very like, very like. Stay'd it long ?

*Hor.* While one with moderate haste might tell a hundred.

*Mar.* } Longer, longer.  
*Ber.* }

*Hor.* Not when I saw't.

*Ham.* His beard was grizzled,—no ?

*Hor.* It was, as I have seen it in his life,

A sable silver'd. *comes*

*Ham.* I will watch to-night ; 240

Perchance 'twill walk again.

*Hor.* I warrant it will.

*Ham.* If it assume my noble father's person, I'll speak to it, though hell itself should gape And bid me hold my peace. I pray you all, If you have hitherto conceal'd this sight, Let it be tenable in your silence still ; And whatsoever else shall hap to-night, Give it an understanding, but no tongue : I will requite your loves. So, fare you well : Upon the platform, 'twixt eleven and twelve, I'll visit you. 250

*All.* Our duty to your honour.

*Ham.* Your loves, as mine to you : farewell.

[*Exeunt all but Hamlet.*

My father's spirit in arms ! all is not well ; !  
 I doubt some foul play : would the night were come !  
 Till then sit still, my soul : foul deeds will rise,  
 Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes.  
 [Exit.]

SCENE III. *A room in Polonius' house.* Enter  
 LAERTES and OPHELIA.

*Laer.* My necessaries are embark'd : farewell :  
 And, sister, as the winds give benefit . . .  
 And convoy is assistant, do not sleep,  
 But let me hear from you.

*Oph.* Do you doubt that ?

*Laer.* For Hamlet and the trifling of his favour,  
 Hold it a fashion, and a toy in blood,  
 A violet in the youth of primy nature,  
 Forward, not permanent, sweet, not lasting,  
 The perfume and suppliance of a minute ;  
 No more.

*Oph.* No more but so ?

*Laer.* Think it no more : 10  
 For nature, crescent, does not grow alone  
 In thews and bulk, but, as this temple waxes,  
 The inward service of the mind and soul  
 Grows wide withal. Perhaps he loves you now,  
 And now no soil nor cautel doth besmirch  
 The virtue of his will : but you must fear,  
His greatness weigh'd, his will is not his own ;  
For he himself is subject to his birth :  
 He may not, as unvalued persons do,  
 Carve for himself ; for on his choice depends 20

The safety and the health of the whole state ;  
 And therefore must his choice be circumscribed  
 Unto the voice and yielding of that body  
 Whereof he is the head. Then if he says he loves  
 you,

It fits your wisdom so far to believe it  
 As he in his particular act and place  
 May give his saying deed ; which is no further  
 Than the main voice of Denmark goes withal.  
 Then weigh what loss your honour may sustain,  
 If with too credent ear you list his songs,      30  
 Or lose your heart, or your chaste treasure open  
 To his unmaster'd importunity.

Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister,  
 And keep you in the rear of your affection,  
 Out of the shot and danger of desire.

The chariest maid is prodigal enough,  
 If she unmask her beauty to the moon :  
Virtue itself 'scapes not calumnious strokes :  
 The canker galls the infants of the spring,

Too oft before their buttons be disclosed,      40  
 And in the morn and liquid dew of youth  
 Contagious blastments are most imminent.  
 Be wary then ; best safety lies in fear :

Youth to itself rebels, though none else near.

Oph. I shall the effect of this good lesson keep,  
 As watchman to my heart. But, good my brother,  
 Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,  
Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven ;  
 Whiles, like a puff'd and reckless libertine,  
 Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,      50  
 And recks not his own rede.

Laer. <sup>hur</sup> O, fear me not.  
 I stay too long : but here my father comes.

*Enter POLONIUS.*

A double blessing is a double grace ;  
Occasion smiles upon a second leave.

*Pol.* Yet here, Laertes ! aboard, aboard, for shame !  
The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,  
And you are stay'd for. There ; my blessing with  
thee !

And these few precepts in thy memory  
See thou character. Give thy thoughts no tongue,  
Nor any unproportion'd thought his act. *Beseech* (6d)  
Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.  
Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,  
Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel ;  
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment  
Of each new-hatch'd, unfledged comrade. Beware  
Of entrance to a quarrel, but being in,  
Bear't that the opposed may beware of thee.  
Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice ;  
Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgement.  
Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy, 70  
But not express'd in fancy ; rich, not gaudy ;  
For the apparel oft proclaims the man, *W*  
And they in France of the best rank and station  
Are most select and generous, chief in that.  
Neither a borrower nor a lender be ;  
For loan oft loses both itself and friend,  
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.  
This above all : to thine own self be true,  
And it must follow, as the night the day,  
Thou canst not then be false to any man. 80  
Farewell : my blessing season this in thee !

*Laer.* Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord.

*Pol.* The time invites you ; go ; your servants tend.

*Laer.* Farewell, Ophelia ; and remember well  
What I have said to you.

*Oph.* 'Tis in my memory lock'd,  
And you yourself shall keep the key of it.

*Laer.* Farewell.

[*Exit.*

*Pol.* What is't, Ophelia, he hath said to you ?

*Oph.* So please you, something touching the Lord  
Hamlet.

*Pol.* Marry, well bethought :

90

'Tis told me, he hath very oft of late  
Given private time to you ; and you yourself  
Have of your audience been most free and bounteous :  
If it be so, as so 'tis put on me,  
And that in way of caution, I must tell you,  
You do not understand yourself so clearly  
As it behoves my daughter and your honour.  
What is between you ? give me up the truth.

*Oph.* He hath, my lord, of late made many tenders  
Of his affection to me.

100

*Pol.* Affection ! pooh ! you speak like a green girl,  
Unsifted in such perilous circumstance.

Do you believe his tenders, as you call them ?

*Oph.* I do not know, my lord, what I should think.

*Pol.* Marry, I'll teach you : think yourself a baby ;  
That you have ta'en these tenders for true pay,  
Which are not sterling. Tender yourself more dearly ;  
Or—not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,  
Running it thus—you'll tender me a fool.

*Oph.* My lord, he hath importuned me with love 110  
In honourable fashion.

*Pol.* Ay, fashion you may call it ; go to, go to.

*Oph.* And hath given countenance to his speech, my  
lord,

With almost all the holy vows of heaven.

*Pol.* Ay, springes to catch woodcocks. I do know,  
 When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul  
Lends the tongue vows : these blazes, daughter,  
 Giving more light than heat, extinct in both,  
 Even in their promise, as it is a-making,  
 You must not take for fire. From this time.      120  
 Be somewhat scanter of your maiden presence ;  
 Set your entreatments at a higher rate  
 Than a command to parley. For Lord Hamlet,  
 Believe so much in him, that he is young,  
 And with a larger tether may he walk  
 Than may be given you : in few, Ophelia,  
 Do not believe his vows ; for they are brokers,  
 Not of that dye which their investments show,  
 But mere implorators of unholy suits,  
 Breathing like sanctified and pious bawds,      130  
 The better to beguile. This is for all :  
 I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth,  
 Have you so slander any moment leisure,  
 As to give words or talk with the Lord Hamlet.  
 Look to't, I charge you : come your ways.

*Oph.* I shall obey, my lord.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV. *The platform.* Enter HAMLET, HORATIO,  
 and MARCELLUS.

*Ham.* The air bites shrewdly ; it is very cold.

*Hor.* It is a nipping and an eager air.

*Ham.* What hour now ?

*Hor.* I think it lacks of twelve.

*Mar.* No, it is struck.

*Hor.* Indeed ? I heard it not : then it draws near  
 the season

¶ Wherein the spirit held his wont to walk.

[*A flourish of trumpets, and ordnance shot off, within.*  
What does this mean, my lord ?

*Ham.* The king doth wake to-night and takes his  
rouse, *Rewake thyself*  
Keeps wassail, and the swaggering up-spring reels ;  
And, as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down, 10  
The kettle-drum and trumpet thus bray out  
The triumph of his pledge.

*Hor.* Is it a custom ?

*Ham.* Ay, marry, is't :  
But to my mind, though I am native here  
And to the manner born, 't is a custom  
More honour'd in the breach than the observance,  
This heavy-headed revel east and west  
Makes us traduced and tax'd of other nations' :  
They clepe us drunkards, and with swinish phrase  
Soil our addition ; and indeed it takes 20  
From our achievements, though perform'd at height,  
The pith and marrow of our attribute.  
So, oft it chances in particular men,  
That for some vicious mole of nature in them,  
As, in their birth—wherein they are not guilty,  
Since nature cannot choose his origin—  
By the o'er-growth of some complexion,  
Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason,  
Or by some habit that too much o'er-leavens  
The form of plausive manners, that these men, 30  
Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect,  
Being nature's livery, or fortune's star,—  
Their virtues else, be they as pure as grace,  
As infinite as man may undergo,  
Shall in the general censure take corruption  
From that particular fault : the dram of base

## HAMLET

Doth all the noble substance often dout.  
To his own scandal.

*Hor.* Look, my lord, it comes !

*Enter Ghost.*

*Ham.* Angels and ministers of grace defend us !  
Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damn'd, 40  
Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell,  
Be thy intents wicked or charitable,  
Thou comest in such a questionable shape  
That I will speak to thee : I'll call thee Hamlet,  
King, father, royal Dane : O, answer me !  
Let me not burst in ignorance ; but tell  
Why thy canonized bones, hearsed in death,  
Have burst their cerements ; why the sepulchre,  
Wherein we saw thee quietly inurn'd, 50  
Hath oped his ponderous and marble jaws,  
To cast thee up again. What may this mean,  
That thou, dead corse, again in complete steel  
Revisit'st thus the glimpses of the moon,  
Making night hideous ; and we fools of nature  
So horridly to shake our disposition  
With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls ?  
Say, why is this ? wherefore ? what should we do ?

[*Ghost beckons Hamlet.*

*Hor.* It beckons you to go away with it,  
As if it some impartment did desire  
To you alone.

*Mar.* Look, with what courteous action 60  
It waves you to a more removed ground :  
But do not go with it.

*Hor.* No, by no means.

*Ham.* It will not speak ; then I will follow it.

*Hor.* Do not, my lord.

*Ham.* Why, what should be the fear ?  
 I do not set my life at a pin's fee ;  
 And for my soul, what can it do to that,  
 Being a thing immortal as itself ?  
 It waves me forth again : I'll follow it.

*Hor.* What if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord,  
 Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff 70  
 That beetles o'er his base into the sea,  
 And there assume some other horrible form,  
 Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason  
 And draw you into madness ? think of it :  
 The very place puts toys of desperation,  
 Without more motive, into every brain  
 That looks so many fathoms to the sea  
 And hears it roar beneath.

*Ham.* It waves me still.  
 Go on ; I'll follow thee.  
*Mar.* You shall not go, my lord.  
*Ham.* Hold off your hands. 80  
*Hor.* Be ruled ; you shall not go.  
*Ham.* My fate cries out,  
 And makes each petty artery in this body  
 As hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve.  
 Still am I call'd. Unhand me, gentlemen.  
 By heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that lets me !  
 I say, away ! Go on ; I'll follow thee.

[*Exeunt Ghost and Hamlet.*

*Hor.* He waxes desperate with imagination.

*Mar.* Let's follow ; 'tis not fit thus to obey him.

*Hor.* Have after. To what issue will this come ?

*Mar.* Something is rotten in the state of Denmark. 90

*Hor.* Heaven will direct it.

*Mar.* Nay, let's follow him.

[*Exeunt.*

And prey on garbage. ? <sup>brent</sup>  
 But, soft ! methinks I scent the morning air ;  
 Brief let me be. Sleeping within my orchard,  
 My custom always of the afternoon, 60  
 Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole,  
With juice of cursed hebenon in a vial, <sup>ad</sup>  
 And in the porches of my ears did pour  
 The leperous distilment ; whose effect  
Holds such an enmity with blood of man  
 That swift as quicksilver it courses through <sup>runn.</sup>  
 The natural gates and alleys of the body, <sup>valley.</sup>  
 And with a sudden vigour it doth posset  
 And curd, like eager droppings into milk,  
 The thin and wholesome blood : so did it mine ; 70  
 And a most instant tetter bark'd about,  
 Most lazarus-like, with vile and loathsome crust,  
 All my smooth body.  
 Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand  
 Of life, of crown, of queen, at once dispatch'd :  
 Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin, <sup>on. 1. } part</sup>  
 Unhousel'd, disappointed, unaneled, <sup>},</sup>  
 No reckoning made, but sent to my account  
 With all my imperfections on my head :  
 O, horrible ! O, horrible ! most horrible ! 80  
 If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not ;  
 Let not the royal bed of Denmark be  
 A couch for luxury and damned incest.  
 But, howsoever thou pursuest this act,  
 Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive  
 Against thy mother aught : leave her to heaven  
 And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge,  
 To prick and sting her. Fare thee well at once !  
 The glow-worm shows the matin to be near,  
 And 'gins to pale his uneffectual fire : 90

Adieu, adieu ! Hamlet, remember me. [Exit.

*Ham.* O all you host of heaven ! O earth ! what else ?

And shall I couple hell ? O, fie ! Hold, hold, my heart ;

And you, my sinews, grow not instant old,  
But bear me stiffly up. Remember thee !

Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat  
In this distracted globe. Remember thee !

Yea, from the table of my memory

I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,

All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past, 100

That youth and observation copied there ;

And thy commandment all alone shall live

Within the book and volume of my brain,

Unmix'd with baser matter : yes, by heaven !

O most pernicious woman !

O villain, villain, smiling, damned villain !

My tables,—meet it is I set it down,

That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain ;

At least I'm sure it may be so in Denmark : [Writing.

So, uncle, there you are. Now to my word ; 110

It is "Adieu, adieu ! remember me."

I have sworn't.

*Mar.* } [Within] My lord, my lord,—  
*Hor.* }

*Mar.* [Within] Lord Hamlet,—

*Hor.* [Within] Heaven secure him !

*Ham.* So be it !

*Hor.* [Within] Hillo, ho, ho, my lord !

*Ham.* Hillo, ho, ho, boy ! come, bird, come.

Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS.

*Mar.* How is't, my noble lord ?

*Hor.* What news, my lord?

*Ham.* O, wonderful!

*Hor.* Good my lord, tell it.

*Ham.* No ; you'll reveal it.

*Hor.* Not I, my lord, by heaven.

*Mar.* Nor I, my lord. 120

*Ham.* How say you, then ; would heart of man once think it ?

But you'll be secret ?

*Hor.* } Ay, by heaven, my lord.

*Mar.*

*Ham.* There's ne'er a villain dwelling in all Denmark

But he's an arrant knave.

*Hor.* There needs no ghost, my lord, come from the grave

To tell us this.

*Ham.* Why, right ; you are i' the right ; And so, without more circumstance at all, I hold it fit that we shake hands and part : You, as your business and desire shall point you ; For every man has business and desire, 130 Such as it is ; and for mine own poor part, Look you, I'll go pray.

*Hor.* These are but wild and whirling words, my lord.

*Ham.* I'm sorry they offend you, heartily ; Yes, 'faith, heartily.

*Hor.* There's no offence, my lord.

*Ham.* Yes, by Saint Patrick, but there is, Horatio, And much offence too. Touching this vision here, It is an honest ghost, that let me tell you : For your desire to know what is between us, O'ermaster't as you may. And now, good friends, 140

As you are friends, scholars and soldiers,  
Give me one poor request.

*Hor.* What is't, my lord? we will.

*Ham.* Never make known what you have seen  
to-night.

*Hor.* } My lord, we will not.  
*Mar.* }

*Ham.* Nay, but swear't.  
*Hor.* In faith,

My lord, not I.

*Mar.* Nor I, my lord, in faith.

*Ham.* Upon my sword.

*Mar.* We have sworn, my lord, already.

*Ham.* Indeed, upon my sword, indeed.

*Ghost.* [Beneath] Swear.

*Ham.* Ah, ha, boy! say'st thou so? art thou there,  
truepenny? *for fellow*

Come on—you hear this fellow in the cellarage—  
Consent to swear.

*Hor.* Propose the oath, my lord.

*Ham.* Never to speak of this that you have seen.  
Swear by my sword.

*Ghost.* [Beneath] Swear, *you and every where*

*Ham.* Hic et ubique? then we'll shift our ground.  
Come hither, gentlemen,  
And lay your hands again upon my sword,  
Never to speak of this that you have heard,  
Swear by my sword.

*Ghost.* [Beneath] Swear.

*Ham.* Well said, old mole! canst work i' the earth  
so fast?

A worthy pioner! Once more remove, good friends.

*Hor.* O day and night, but this is wondrous strange!

*Ham.* And therefore as a stranger give it welcome.

There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,  
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.

But come ;

Here, as before, never, so help you mercy,  
 How strange or odd soe'er I bear myself, 170  
 As I perchance hereafter shall think meet  
 To put an antic disposition on,  
 That you, at such times seeing me, never shall,  
 With arms encumber'd thus, or this head-shake,  
 Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase,  
 As, " Well, well, we know," or " We could, an if we  
 would,"  
 Or " If we list to speak," or " There be, an if they  
 might,"  
 Or such ambiguous giving out, to note,  
 That you know aught of me : this not to do,  
 So grace and mercy at your most need help you, 180  
 Swear.

*Ghost. [Beneath] Swear.*

*Ham. Rest, rest, perturbed spirit ! [They swear.]*

So, gentlemen,

With all my love I do commend me to you :  
 And what so poor a man as Hamlet is .  
 May do, to express his love and friending to you,  
 God willing, shall not lack. Let us go in together ;  
 And still your fingers on your lips, I pray,  
The time is out of joint : O cursed spite, //  
That ever I was born to set it right ! 190  
 Nay, come, let's go together.

[*Exeunt.*]

## ACT II

SCENE I. *A room in Polonius' house.* Enter  
POLONIUS and REYNALDO.

*Pol.* Give him this money and these notes, Reynaldo.

*Rey.* I will, my lord.

*Pol.* You shall do marvellous wisely, good Reynaldo,  
Before you visit him, to make inquire  
Of his behaviour.

*Rey.* My lord, I did intend it.

*Pol.* Marry, well said ; very well said. Look you,

sir,

Inquire me first what Danskers are in Paris ;  
And how, and who, what means, and where they keep,  
What company, at what expense ; and finding  
By this encompassment and drift of question      10  
That they do know my son, come you more nearer  
Than your particular demands will touch it :  
Take you, as 'twere, some distant knowledge of him ;  
As thus, " I know his father and his friends,  
And in part him :" do you mark this, Reynaldo ?

*Rey.* Ay, very well, my lord.

*Pol.* " And in part him ; but " you may say " not  
well :

But if't be he I mean, he's very wild ;  
Addicted so and so :" and there put on him  
What forgeries you please ; marry, none so rank    20  
As may dishonour him ; take heed of that ;

But, sir, such wanton, wild and usual slips  
As are companions noted and most known  
To youth and liberty.

*Rey.* As gaming, my lord.

*Pol.* Ay, or drinking, fencing, swearing, quarrelling.  
You may go so far.

*Rey.* My lord, that would dishonour him.

*Pol.* 'Faith, no ; as you may season it in the charge.  
You must not put another scandal on him,  
That he is open to incontinency ;      30  
That's not my meaning : but breathe his faults so  
quaintly

That they may seem the taints of liberty,  
The flash and outbreak of a fiery mind,  
A savageness in unreclaimed blood,  
Of general assault. *to w. Hallam's note*

*Rey.* But, my good lord,—

*Pol.* Wherefore should you do this ?

*Rey.* Ay, my lord,  
I would know that.

*Pol.* Marry, sir, here's my drift ;  
And, I believe, it is a fetch of wit : *a plan of sneeze*  
You laying these slight sullies on my son,  
As 'twere a thing a little soil'd i' the working,      40  
Mark you,      *Sullies*  
Your party in converse, him you would sound,  
Having ever seen in the prenominate crimes  
The youth you breathe of guilty, be assured  
He closes with you in this consequence :  
“ Good sir,” or so, or “ friend,” or “ gentleman,”  
According to the phrase or the addition  
Of man and country.

*Rey.* Very good, my lord.

*Pol.* And then, sir, does he this—he does—what was

I about to say ? By the mass, I was about to say something : where did I leave ? 51

*Rey.* At "closes in the consequence," at "friend or so," and "gentleman."

*Pol.* At "closes in the consequence," ay, marry ; He closes with you thus : "I know the gentleman ; I saw him yesterday, or t'other day, Or then, or then ; with such, or such ; and, as you say,

There was he gaming ; there o'ertook in's rouse ; There falling out at tennis."

See you now ; 60

Your bait of falsehood takes this carp of truth :

And thus do we of wisdom and of reach,

With windlasses and with assays of bias,

By indirections find directions out :

So by my former lecture and advice, 6

Shall you my son. You have me, have you not ?

*Rey.* My lord, I have.

*Pol.* God be wi' you ; fare you well.

*Rey.* Good my lord !

*Pol.* Observe his inclination in yourself. 6

*Rey.* I shall, my lord. 70

*Pol.* And let him ply his music.

*Rey.* Well, my lord.

*Pol.* Farewell ! [Exit Reynaldo.

### Enter OPHELIA

How now, Ophelia ! what's the matter?

*Oph.* O, my lord, my lord, I have been so affrighted!

*Pol.* With what, i' the name of God ?

*Oph.* My lord, as I was sewing in my closet, Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unbraced ; No hat upon his head ; his stockings foul'd,

# HAMLET

[ACT II

Ungarter'd, and down-gyved to his ancle ;  
Pale as his shirt ; his knees knocking each other ;  
And with a look so piteous in purport  
As if he had been loosed out of hell  
To speak of horrors,—he comes before me.

*Pol.* Mad for thy love?

*Oph.* My lord, I do not know ;  
But truly, I do fear it.

*Pol.* What said he?

*Oph.* He took me by the wrist and held me hard ;  
Then goes he to the length of all his arm ;  
And, with his other hand thus o'er his brow,  
He falls to such perusal of my face

As he would draw it. Long stay'd he so ;  
At last, a little shaking of mine arm      90  
And thrice his head thus waving up and down,  
He raised a sigh so piteous and profound  
As it did seem to shatter all his bulk  
And end his being : that done, he lets me go :  
And, with his head over his shoulder turn'd,  
He seem'd to find his way without his eyes ;  
For out o' doors he went without their help, eyes  
And, to the last, bended their light on me.

*Pol.* Come, go with me : I will go seek the king.  
This is the very ecstasy of love,  
Whose violent property fordes itself. <sup>100</sup> *destroys him*  
And leads the will to desperate undertakings  
As oft as any passion under heaven  
That does afflict our natures. I am sorry.

What, have you given him any hard words of late?

*Oph.* No, my good lord, but, as you did command,  
I did repel his letters and denied  
His access to me. *He comes for me*

*Pol.* That hath made him mad.

I am sorry that with better heed and judgement  
 I had not quoted him : I fear'd he did but trifle, 110  
 And meant to wreck thee ; but, beshrew my jealousy !  
 By heaven, it is as proper to our age  
To cast beyond ourselves in our opinions *b. b. b.*  
 As it is common for the younger sort  
To lack discretion. Come, go we to the king :  
 This must be known ; which, being kept close, might  
 move  
 More grief to hide than hate to utter love. [Exeunt.

SCENE II. *A room in the castle.* Enter KING, QUEEN,  
 ROSENCRANTZ, GULDENSTERN, and Attendants.

King. Welcome, dear Rosencrantz and Guilden-  
 stern !  
 Moreover that we much did long to see you,  
 The need we have to use you did provoke  
 Our hasty sending. Something have you heard  
Of Hamlet's transformation ; so call it,  
Sith nor the exterior nor the inward man  
 Resembles that it was. What it should be,  
More than his father's death, that thus hath put him  
 So much from the understanding of himself,  
 I cannot dream of : I entreat you both, 10  
 That, being of so young days brought up with him,  
 And sith so neighbour'd to his youth and humour,  
 That you vouchsafe your rest here in our court  
 Some little time : so by your companies  
 To draw him on to pleasures, and to gather,  
 So much as from occasion you may glean,  
 Whether aught, to us unknown, afflicts him thus,  
 That, open'd, lies within our remedy.

*Queen.* Good gentlemen, he hath much talk'd of you ;  
 And sure I am two men there are not living 20  
 To whom he more adheres. If it will please you  
 To show us so much gentry and good will,  
 As to expend your time with us awhile,  
 For the supply and profit of our hope,  
 Your visitation shall receive such thanks  
 As fits a king's remembrance.

*Ros.* Both your majesties  
 Might, by the sovereign power you have of us,  
 Put your dread pleasures more into command  
 Than to entreaty. 11

*Guil.* But we both obey,  
 And here give up ourselves, in the full bent 30  
 To lay our service freely at your feet,  
 To be commanded.

*King.* Thanks, Rosencrantz and gentle Guildenstern.

*Queen.* Thanks, Guildenstern and gentle Rosencrantz :  
 And I beseech you instantly to visit  
My too much changed son. Go, some of you,  
 And bring these gentlemen where Hamlet is.

*Guil.* Heavens make our presence and our practices  
 Pleasant and helpful to him !

*Queen.* Ay, amen !

[*Exeunt Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, and some Attendants.*]

*Enter POLONIUS.*

*Pol.* The ambassadors from Norway, my good lord,  
 Are joyfully return'd. 41

*King.* Thou still hast been the father of good news.

*Pol.* Have I, my lord ? I assure my good liege,

I hold my duty, as I hold my soul,  
 Both to my God and to my gracious king :  
And I do think, or else this brain of mine  
 Hunts not the trail of policy so sure  
 As it hath used to do, that I have found  
 The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy.

*King.* O, speak of that, that do I long to hear. 50

*Pol.* Give first admittance to the ambassadors ;  
 My news shall be the fruit to that great feast.

*King.* Thyself do grace to them, and bring them in.

*source Queen* [Exit Polonius.  
 He tells me, my dear Gertrude, he hath found  
 The head and source of all your son's distemper.

*Queen.* I doubt it is no other but the main ;  
 His father's death, and our o'erhasty marriage.

*King.* Well, we shall sift him.

*Re-enter POLONIUS, with VOLTIMAND and CORNELIUS.*

Welcome, my good friends !

Say, Voltimand, what from our brother Norway ?

*Volt.* Most fair return of greetings and desires, 60  
 Upon our first, he sent out to suppress  
 His nephew's levies ; which to him appear'd  
 To be a preparation 'gainst the Polack ;  
 But, better look'd into, he truly found  
 It was against your highness : whereat grieved,  
 That so his sickness, age and impotence  
 Was falsely borne in hand, sends out arrests  
 On Fortinbras ; which he, in brief, obeys ;  
 Receives rebuke from Norway, and in fine  
 Makes vow before his uncle never more 70  
 To give the assay of arms against your majesty.  
 Whereon old Norway, overcome with joy,  
 Gives him three thousand crowns in annual fee,  
 And his commission to employ those soldiers,

So levied as before, against the Polack :  
With an entreaty, herein further shown,

[*Giving a paper.*

That it might please you to give quiet pass  
Through your dominions for this enterprise,  
On such regards of safety and allowance  
As therein are set down.

*King.* It likes us well :      80  
And at our more consider'd time we'll read,  
Answer, and think upon this business.  
Meantime we thank you for your well-took labour :  
Go to your rest ; at night we'll feast together :  
Most welcome home ! [*Exeunt Voltimand and Cornelius.*

. *Pol.* This business is well ended.  
My liege, and madam, to expostulate, ~~think~~  
What majesty should be, what duty is,  
Why day is day, night night, and time is time,  
Were nothing but to waste night, day and time.  
Therefore, since brevity is the soul of wit,      90  
And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes,  
I will be brief : your noble son is mad :  
Mad call it I ; for, to define true madness,  
What is't but to be nothing else but mad ?  
But let that go.

*Queen.* More matter, with less art.  
*Pol.* Madam, I swear I use no art at all.  
That he is mad, 'tis true : 'tis true 'tis pity ;  
And pity 'tis 'tis true : a foolish figure ;  
But farewell it, for I will use no art.  
Mad let us grant him, then : and now remains      100  
That we find out the cause of this effect,  
Or rather say, the cause of this defect,  
For this effect defective comes by cause :  
Thus it remains, and the remainder thus.

Perpend. Consider carefully what  
 I have a daughter—have while she is mine—  
 Who, in her duty and obedience, mark,  
 Hath given me this : now gather, and surmise.

[Reads.]

“ To the celestial and my soul’s idol, the most  
 beautified Ophelia,”— 110

That’s an ill phrase, a vile phrase ; “ beautified ” is a  
 vile phrase : but you shall hear. Thus : [Reads.]

“ In her excellent white bosom, these, &c.”

Queen. Came this from Hamlet to her ?

Pol. Good madam, stay awhile : I will be faithful.

[Reads.]

“ Doubt thou the stars are fire :

    Doubt that the sun doth move ;

    Doubt truth to be a liar ;

    But never doubt I love. 119

“ O dear Ophelia, I am ill at these numbers ; I have  
 not art to reckon my groans : but that I love thee  
 best, O most best, believe it. Adieu.

“ Thine evermore, most dear lady, whilst this  
 machine is to him, HAMLET.”

This, in obedience, hath my daughter shown me,  
 And more above, hath his solicitings,  
 As they fell out by time, by means and place,  
 All given to mine ear.

King. But how hath she

Received his love ?

Pol. What do you think of me ?

King. As of a man faithful and honourable. 130

Pol. I would fain prove so. But what might you  
 think,

When I had seen this hot love on the wing—  
 As I perceived it, I must tell you that,

Before my daughter told me—what might you,  
 Or my dear majesty your queen here, think,  
 If I had play'd the desk or table-book, <sup>remain'd</sup>  
 Or given my heart a winking, mute and dumb,  
 Or look'd upon this love with idle sight ;  
 What might you think ? No, I went round to work,  
 And my young mistress thus I did bespeak :      140  
 “ Lord Hamlet is a prince, out of thy star ;  
 This must not be : ” and then I prescripts gave her,  
 That she should lock herself from his resort,  
 Admit no messengers, receive no tokens,  
 Which done, she took the fruits of my advice ;  
 And he, repulsed—a short tale to make—  
Fell into a sadness, then into a fast,  
 Thence to a watch, thence into a weakness,  
 Thence to a lightness, and, by this declension,  
Into the madness wherein now he raves,      150  
 And all we mourn for.

*King.*                          Do you think 'tis this ?

*Queen.* It may be, very likely.

*Pol.* Hath there been such a time—I'd fain know  
 that—

That I have positively said “ 'Tis so,”

When it proved otherwise ?

*King.*                          Not that I know.

*Pol.* [Pointing to his head and shoulder] Take this from  
 this, if this be otherwise :

If circumstances lead me, I will find

Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeed

Within the centre.

*King.*                          How may we try it further ?

*Pol.* You know, sometimes he walks four hours  
 together      160

Here in the lobby.

*Queen.* So he does indeed.

*Pol.* At such a time I'll loose my daughter to him :  
Be you and I behind an arras then ; *as if a cattle*  
Mark the encounter : if he love her not  
And be not from his reason fall'n thereon,  
Let me be no assistant for a state, *I will risk my self*  
But keep a farm and carters.

*King.* We will try it.

*Queen.* But look, where sadly the poor wretch comes  
reading.

*Pol.* Away, I do beseech you, both away :  
I'll board him presently.

[*Exeunt King, Queen, and Attendants.*

*Enter HAMLET, reading.*

O, give me leave :      170  
How does my good Lord Hamlet ?

*Ham.* Well, God-a-mercy.

*Pol.* Do you know me, my lord ?

*Ham.* Excellent well ; you are a fishmonger.

*Pol.* Not I, my lord.

*Ham.* Then I would you were so honest a man.<sup>as</sup>

*Pol.* Honest, my lord !

*Ham.* Ay, sir ; to be honest, as this world goes, is to  
be one man picked out of ten thousand.

*Pol.* That's very true, my lord.      180

*Ham.* For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog,  
being a god kissing carrion,—Have you a daughter ?

*Pol.* I have, my lord.

*Ham.* Let her not walk i' the sun : conception is a  
blessing : but not as your daughter may conceive.  
Friend, look to 't.

*Pol.* [Aside] How say you by that ? Still harping on

my daughter : yet he knew me not at first ; he said I was a fishmonger : he is far gone, far gone : and truly in my youth I suffered much extremity for love ; very near this. I'll speak to him again. What do you read, my lord ?

192

*Ham.* Words, words, words.

*Pol.* What is the matter, my lord ?

*Ham.* Between who ?

*Pol.* I mean, the matter that you read, my lord.

*Ham.* Slanders, sir : for the satirical rogue says here that old men have grey beards, that their faces are wrinkled, their eyes purging thick amber and plum-tree gum and that they have a plentiful lack of wit, together with most weak hams : all which, sir, though I most powerfully and potently believe, yet I hold it not honesty to have it thus set down, for yourself, sir, should be old as I am, if like a crab you could go backward.

205

*Pol.* [Aside] Though this be madness, yet there is method in't. Will you walk out of the air, my lord ?

*Ham.* Into my grave.

*Pol.* Indeed, that is out o' the air. [Aside] How pregnant sometimes his replies are ! a happiness that often madness hits on, which reason and sanity could not so prosperously be delivered of. I will leave him, and suddenly contrive the means of meeting between him and my daughter.—My honourable lord, I will most humbly take my leave of you.

215

*Ham.* You cannot, sir, take from me any thing that I will more willingly part withal : except my life, except my life, except my life.

*Pol.* Fare you well, my lord.

*Ham.* These tedious old fools !

220

*Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.*

*Pol.* You go to seek the Lord Hamlet ; there he is.

*Ros.* [To Polonius] God save you, sir !

[Exit Polonius.]

*Guil.* My honoured lord !

*Ros.* My most dear lord !

*Ham.* My excellent good friends ! How dost thou, Guildenstern ? Ah, Rosencrantz ! Good lads, how do you both ?

*Ros.* As the indifferent children of the earth.

*Guil.* Happy, in that we are not over happy ; On fortune's cap we are not the very button. 230

*Ham.* Nor the soles of her shoe ? *Nietum*

*Ros.* Neither, my lord.

*Ham.* What's the news ?

*Ros.* None, my lord, but that the world's grown honest.

*Ham.* Then is doomsday near : but your news is not true. Let me question more in particular : what have you, my good friends, deserved at the hands of fortune, that she sends you to prison hither ?

*Guil.* Prison, my lord !

*Ham.* Denmark's a prison.

*Ros.* Then is the world one.

*Ham.* A goodly one ; in which there are many confines, wards and dungeons, Denmark, being one o' the worst.

*Ros.* We think not so, my lord.

*Ham.* Why, then, 'tis none to you ; for there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so : to me it is a prison.

*Ros.* Why, then, your ambition makes it one ; 'tis too narrow for your mind. 251

*Ham.* O God, I could be bounded in a nutshell and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams. Small

*Guil.* Which dreams are indeed ambition, for the very substance of the ambitious is merely the shadow of a dream.

*Ham.* A dream itself is but a shadow.

*Ros.* Truly, and I hold ambition of so airy and light a quality that it is but a shadow's shadow. real 260

*Ham.* Then are our beggars bodies, and our monarchs and outstretched heroes the beggars' shadows. Shall we to the court? for by my fay, I cannot reason. real

*Ros.* } We'll wait upon you.

*Guil.* } real

*Ham.* No such matter: I will not sort you with the rest of my servants, for, to speak to you like an honest man, I am most dreadfully attended. But, in the beaten way of friendship, what make you at Elsinore?

*Ros.* To visit you, my lord; no other occasion. real 270

*Ham.* Beggar that I am, I am even poor in thanks; but I thank you: and sure, dear friends, my thanks are too dear a halfpenny. Were you not sent for? Is it your own inclining? Is it a free visitation? Come, deal justly with me: come, come; nay, speak.

*Guil.* What should we say, my lord?

*Ham.* Why, any thing, but to the purpose. You were sent for; and there is a kind of confession in your looks which your modesties have not craft enough to colour: I know the good king and queen have sent for you. real 282

*Ros.* To what end, my lord?

*Ham.* That you must teach me. But let me conjure

you, by the rights of our fellowship, by the consonancy of our youth, by the obligation of our ever-preserved love, and by what more dear a better proposer could charge you withal, be even and direct with me, whether you were sent for, or no? *advocate*

Ros. [Aside to Guil.] What say you? 290

Ham. [Aside] Nay, then, I have an eye of you.—If you love me, hold not off.

Guil. My lord, we were sent for.

Ham. I will tell you why; so shall my anticipation prevent your discovery, and your secrecy to the king and queen ~~will not suffer~~ <sup>not suffer</sup> moult no feather. I have of late—but wherefore I know not—lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises; and indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory, this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. What a piece of work is man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? man delights not me: no, nor woman neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so. *+ misanthropic* 312

Ros. My lord, there was no such stuff in my thoughts.

Ham. Why did you laugh then, when I said “man delights not me”?

Ros. To think, my lord, if you delight not in man, what lenten entertainment the players shall receive

from you : we coted them on the way ; and hither  
are they coming, to offer you service. 320

*Ham.* He that plays the king shall be welcome ; his  
majesty shall have tribute of me ; the adventurous  
knight shall use his foil and target ; the lover shall  
not sigh gratis ; the humorous man shall end his part  
in peace ; the clown shall make those laugh whose  
lungs are tickle o' the sere ; and the lady shall say her  
mind freely, or the blank verse shall halt for't. What  
players are they ?

*Ros.* Even those you were wont to take delight in,  
the tragedians of the city. 330

*Ham.* How chances it they travel ? their residence,  
both in reputation and profit, was better both ways.

*Ros.* I think their inhibition comes by the means of  
the late innovation. *See the note*

*Ham.* Do they hold the same estimation they did  
when I was in the city ? are they so followed ?

*Ros.* No, indeed, are they not.

*Ham.* How comes it ? do they grow rusty ? 338

*Ros.* Nay, their endeavour keeps in the wonted pace :  
but there is, sir, an aery of children, little eyases, that  
cry out on the top of question, and are most tyrannically  
clapped for't : these are now the fashion, and so  
berattle the common stages—so they call them—that  
many wearing rapiers are afraid of goose quills and  
dare scarce come thither.

*Ham.* What, are they children ? who maintains  
'em ? how are they escoted? Will they pursue the  
quality no longer than they can sing ? will they not  
say afterwards, if they should grow themselves to  
common players—as it is most like, if their means are  
no better—their writers do them wrong, to make them  
exclaim against their own succession? 352

Ros. 'Faith, there has been much to do on both sides ; and the nation holds it no sin to tarre them to controversy : there was, for a while, no bid for argument, unless the poet and the player went to cuffs in the question.

*Ham.* Is't possible ?

*Guil.* O, there has been much throwing about of brains. 360

*Ham.* Do the boys carry it away ? *win the day*

Ros. Ay, that they do, my lord ; Hercules and his load too. *an affusion to it*

*Ham.* It is not very strange ; for mine uncle is king of Denmark, and those that would make mows at him while my father lived, give twenty, forty, fifty, a hundred ducats a-piece for his picture in little. 'Sblood, there is something in this more than natural, if philosophy could find it out.

[*Flourish of trumpets within.*

*Guil.* There are the players. 370

*Ham.* Gentlemen, you are welcome to Elsinore. Your hands, come then : the appurtenance of welcome is fashion and ceremony : let me comply with you in this garb, lest my extent to the players, which, I tell you, must show fairly outward, should more appear like entertainment than yours. You are welcome : but my uncle-father and aunt-mother are deceived.

*Guil.* In what, my dear lord ?

*Ham.* I am but mad north-north-west : when the wind is southerly I know a hawk from a handsaw. 381

*Re-enter POLONIUS.*

*Pol.* Well be with you, gentlemen !

*Ham.* Hark you, Guildenstern ; and you too : at

each ear a hearer : that great baby you see there is not yet out of his swaddling-clouts.

*Ros.* Happily he's the second time come to them ; for they say an old man is twice a child.

*Ham.* I will prophesy he comes to tell me of the players ; mark it. You say right, sir : o' Monday morning ; 'twas so indeed. 390

*Pol.* My lord, I have news to tell you.

*Ham.* My lord, I have news to tell you. When Roscius was an actor in Rome,—

*Pol.* The actors are come hither, my lord.

*Ham.* Buz, buz !

*Pol.* Upon mine honour,—

*Ham.* Then came each actor on his ass,—

*Pol.* The best actors in the world either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral, scene individable, or poem unlimited : Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor Plautus too light. For the law of writ and the liberty, these are the only men. *from formal types of drama*

*Ham.* O Jephthah, judge of Israel, what a treasure hadst thou !

*Pol.* What a treasure had he, my lord ?

*Ham.* Why,

“ One fair daughter, and no more,  
The which he loved passing well.” 410

*Pol.* [Aside] Still on my daughter.

*Ham.* Am I not i' the right, old Jephthah ?

*Pol.* If you call me Jephthah, my lord, I have a daughter that I love passing well.

*Ham.* Nay, that follows not.

*Pol.* What follows, then, my lord ?

*Ham.* Why,

" As by lot, God wot,"  
and then, you know,

" It came to pass, as most like it was,"— 420  
the first row of the pious chanson will show you more :  
for look, where my abridgement comes.

*Slanya* <sup>interpretation</sup> Enter four or five Players.

You are welcome, masters ; welcome, all. I am glad to see thee well. Welcome, good friends. O, my old friend ! thy face is valanced since I saw thee last : comest thou to beard me in Denmark ? What, my young lady and mistress ! By'r lady, your ladyship is nearer to heaven than when I saw you last, by the altitude of a chopine.<sup>See</sup> Pray God, your voice, like a piece of uncurrent gold, be not cracked within the ring. Masters, you are all welcome. We'll e'en to't like French falconers, fly at any thing we see : we'll have a speech straight : come, give us a taste of your quality ; come, a passionate speech. 434

*First Play.* What speech, my lord ?

*Ham.* I heard thee speak me a speech once, but it was never acted : or, if it was, not above once ; for the play, I remember, pleased not the million ; 'twas caviare to the general : but it was—as I received it, and others, whose judgements in such matters cried in the top of mine—an excellent play, well digested in the scenes, set down with as much modesty as cunning. I remember, one said there were no sallets in the lines to make the matter savoury, nor no matter in the phrase that might indict the author of affection ; but called it an honest method, as wholesome as sweet, and by very much more handsome than fine. One speech in it I chiefly loved : 'twas Aeneas' tale to

Dido ; and thereabout of it especially, where he  
speaks of Priam's slaughter : if it live in your memory,  
begin at this line : let me see, let me see— 451

“ The rugged Pyrrhus, like the Hyrcanian beast,”—  
it is not so :—it begins with Pyrrhus :— 452

“ The rugged Pyrrhus, he whose sable arms,  
Black as his purpose, did the night resemble  
When he lay couched in the ominous horse,  
Hath now this dread and black complexion  
smear'd *ways of blood*  
With heraldry more dismal : head to foot  
Now is he total gules ; horridly trick'd  
With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons,  
Baked and impasted with the parching streets, 461  
That lend a tyrannous and damned light  
To their vile murders : roasted in wrath and fire,  
And thus o'er-sized with coagulate gore,  
With eyes like carbuncles, the hellish Pyrrhus  
Old grandsire Priam seeks.” 462

So, proceed you.

*Pol.* 'Fore God, my lord, well spoken, with good  
accent and good discretion.

*First Play.* “ Anon he finds him

Striking too short at Greeks ; his antique sword,  
Rebellious to his arm, lies where it falls, 471  
Repugnant to command : unequal match'd,  
Pyrrhus at Priam drives ; in rage strikes wide ;  
But with the whiff and wind of his fell sword  
The unnerved father falls. Then senseless Ilium  
Seeming to feel this blow, with flaming top *on*  
Stoops to his base, and with a hideous crash  
Takes prisoner Pyrrhus' ear : for, lo ! his sword,  
Which was declining on the milky head

Of reverend Priam, seem'd i' the air to stick : 480  
 So, as a painted tyrant, Pyrrhus stood,  
 And like a neutral to his will and matter,  
 Did nothing.

But, as we often see, against some storm,  
 A silence in the heavens, the rack stand still,  
 The bold winds speechless and the orb below  
 As hush as death, anon the dreadful thunder  
 Doth rend the region, so, after Pyrrhus' pause,  
 Aroused vengeance sets him new a-work ;  
 And never did the Cyclops' hammers fall 490  
 On Mars's armour forged for proof eterne  
 With less remorse than Pyrrhus' bleeding sword  
 Now falls on Priam.

Out, out, thou strumpet, Fortune ! All you gods,  
 In general synod, take away her power ;  
 Break all the spokes and fellies from her wheel,  
 And bowl the round nave down the hill of heaven,  
 As low as to the fiends ! *Hub of the Wheel*

*Pol.* This is too long. 499

*Ham.* It shall to the barber's with your beard.  
 Prithee, say on : he's for a jig or a tale of bawdry, or  
 he sleeps : say on : come to Hecuba.

*First Play.* " But who, O, who had seen the mobled  
 queen— " *a quick dance*

*Ham.* " The mobled queen ? "

*Pol.* That's good ; " mobled queen " is good.

*First Play.* " Run barefoot up and down, threatening  
 ing the flames *bending bairns*

With bisson rheum ; a clout upon that head  
 Where late the diadem stood, and for a robe,  
 About her lank and all o'er-teemed loins, *extrem* 510  
 A blanket, in the alarm of fear caught up ;  
 Who this had seen, with tongue in venom steep'd,

'Gainst Fortune's state would treason have pronounced :

But if the gods themselves did see her then  
When she saw Pyrrhus make malicious sport  
In mincing with his sword her husband's limbs,  
The instant burst of clamour that she made,  
Unless things mortal move them not at all,  
Would have made milch the burning eyes of  
heaven, <sup>which</sup> ~~would have drawn tears from~~  
And passion in the gods." <sup>520</sup> *Eyes of Heaven.*

*Pol.* Look, whether he has not turned his colour and has tears in's eyes. Pray you, no more.

*Ham:* 'Tis well ; I'll have thee speak out the rest soon. Good my lord, will you see the players well bestowed? Do you hear, let them be well used; for they are the abstracts and brief chronicles of the time : after your death you were better have a bad epitaph than their ill report while you live.

*Pol.* My lord, I will use them according to their desert. <sup>530</sup>

*Ham.* God's bodykins, man, much better : use every man after his desert, and who should 'scape whipping ? Use them after your own honour and dignity : the less they deserve, the more merit is in your bounty. Take them in.

*Pol.* Come, sirs.

*Ham.* Follow him, friends : we'll hear a play to-morrow. [Exit Polonius with all the Players but the First.] Dost thou hear me, old friend ; can you play the Murder of Gonzago ? <sup>540</sup>

*First Play.* Ay, my lord.

*Ham.* We'll ha't to-morrow night. You could, for a need, study a speech of some dozen or sixteen lines, which I would set down and insert in't, could you not?

*First Play.* Ay, my lord.

*Ham.* Very well. Follow that lord ; and look you mock him not. [Exit *First Player.*] My good friends, I'll leave you till night : you are welcome to Elsinore.

*Ros.* Good my lord !

549

*Ham.* Ay, so, God be wi' ye ; [Exeunt *Rosencrantz* and *Guildenstern.*] Now I am alone.

O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I !

Is it not monstrous that this player here,  
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,  
Could force his soul so to his own conceit  
That from her working all his visage wann'd, <sup>green</sup>  
Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect,  
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting  
With forms to his conceit ? and all for nothing !

For Hecuba ! <sup>This being very much fell with wt</sup>  
What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba, <sup>abt</sup> Hamlet 560.  
That he should weep for her ? What would he do,  
Had he the motive and the cue for passion  
That I haye ? He would drown the stage with tears  
And cleave the general ear with horrid speech,  
Make mad the guilty and appal the free,  
Confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed  
The very faculties of eyes and ears.

Yet I,  
A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak, <sup>fallt</sup>  
Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause, 570  
And can say nothing ; no, not for a king,  
Upon whose property and most dear life  
A damn'd defeat was made. Am I a coward ?  
Who calls me villain ? breaks my pate across ?  
Plucks off my beard, and blows it in my face ?  
Tweaks me by the nose ? gives me the lie i' the throat,  
As deep as to the lungs ? who does me this ?

Ha !

'Swounds, I should take it : for it cannot be  
 But I am pigeon-liver'd and lack gall anger 580  
 To make oppression bitter, or ere this  
 I should have fatted all the region kites  
 With this slave's offal : bloody, bawdy villain !  
 Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain !  
 O, vengeance ! *wishes me*

Why, what an ass am I ! This is most brave,  
 That I, the son of a dear father murder'd,  
Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,  
 Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words,  
 And fall a-cursing, like a very drab, brushable 590  
A scullion !

Fie upon't ! fooh ! About, my brain ! I have heard  
 That guilty creatures sitting at a play  
 Have by the very cunning of the scene  
 Been struck so to the soul that presently  
 They have proclaim'd their malefactions *misdeeds*.  
 For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak  
 With most miraculous organ. I'll have these players  
 Play something like the murder of my father  
Before mine uncle : I'll observe his looks ; 600  
 I'll tent him to the quick : if he but blench,  
 I know my course. The spirit that I have seen  
 May be the devil : and the devil hath power  
 To assume a pleasing shape ; yea, and perhaps  
 Out of my weakness and my melancholy,  
 As he is very potent with such spirits,  
 Abuses me to damn me : I'll have grounds  
 More relative than this : the play's the thing  
 Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king.

[Exit.]

## ACT III

SCENE I. *A room in the castle.* Enter KING, QUEEN, POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDEN-STERN.

*King.* And can you, by no drift of circumstance,  
Get from him why he puts on this confusion,  
Grating so harshly all his days of quiet  
With turbulent and dangerous lunacy?

*Ros.* He does confess he feels himself distracted :  
But from what cause he will by no means speak.

*Guil.* Nor do we find him forward to be sounded,  
But, with a crafty madness, keeps aloof.  
When we would bring him on to some confession  
Of his true state.

*Queen.* Did he receive you well? 10

*Ros.* Most like a gentleman.

*Guil.* But with much forcing of his disposition.

*Ros.* Niggard of question ; but, of our demands,  
Most free in his reply.

*Queen.* Did you assay him 1000  
To any pastime?

*Ros.* Madam, it so fell out, that certain players  
We o'er-raught on the way : of these we told him ;  
And there did seem in him a kind of joy  
To hear of it : they are about the court,  
And, as I think, they have already order  
This night to play before him. 20

*Pol.* 'Tis most true :  
And he beseech'd me to entreat your majesties  
To hear and see the matter.

*King.* With all my heart ; and it doth much content  
me  
To hear him so inclined.

Good gentlemen, give him a further edge, *jig him*  
And drive his purpose on to these delights.

*Ros.* We shall, my lord.

[*Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.*]

*King.* Sweet Gertrude, leave us too ;  
For we have closely sent for Hamlet hither,  
That he, as 'twere by accident, may here      30  
Affront Ophelia :

Her father and myself, lawful espials, *Spies*  
Will so bestow ourselves that, seeing, unseen,  
We may of their encounter frankly judge,  
And gather by him, as he is behaved,  
If't be the affliction of his love or no  
That thus he suffers for.

*Queen.* I shall obey you.  
And for your part, Ophelia, I do wish  
That your good beauties be the happy cause  
Of Hamlet's wildness : so shall I hope your virtues 40  
Will bring him to his wanted *usual* way again,  
To both your honours.

*Oph.* Madam, I wish it may. [Exit Queen.  
*Pol.* Ophelia, walk you here. Gracious, so please  
you,

We will bestow ourselves. [*To Ophelia.*] Read on  
this book ;  
That show of such an exercise may colour  
Your loneliness. We are oft to blame in this,—  
'Tis too much proved—that with devotion's visage

And pious action we do sugar o'er  
The devil himself.

*King.* [Aside.] O, 'tis too true ! 49  
How smart a lash that speech doth give my conscience!  
The harlot's cheek, beautified with plastering art,  
Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it  
Than is my deed to my most painted word :  
O heavy burthen !

*Pol.* I hear him coming : let's withdraw, my lord.

[*Exeunt King and Polonius.*

*Enter HAMLET.*

*To be, or not to be* <sup>to live or to commit suicide</sup> : that is the question :  
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,  
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,  
And by opposing end them ? To die : to sleep ; 60  
No more ; and by a sleep to say we end  
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks  
That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation  
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep ;  
To sleep : perchance to dream : ay, there's the rub  
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come  
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil, <sup>and</sup> 69  
Must give us pause : there's the respect <sup>Respect = C</sup> That makes calamity of so long life ;  
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,  
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,  
The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,  
The insolence of office and the spurns  
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,  
When he himself might his quietus make  
With a bare bodkin ? who would fardels bear,  
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,

But that the dread of something after death,  
The undiscover'd country from whose bourn  
No traveller returns, puzzles the will v 80  
 And makes us rather bear those ills we have  
 Than fly to others that we know not of?  
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all ;  
And thus the native hue of resolution ~~anxiously~~  
 Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,  
 And enterprises of great pitch and moment ~~lifly an~~  
 With this regard their currents turn awry, ~~mom~~  
 And lose the name of action.—Soft you now!  
The fair Ophelia ! Nymph, in thy orisons ~~praye~~  
 Be all my sins remember'd. ~~A.~~

*Oph.* Good my lord, 90  
 How does your honour for this many a day? ~~day~~ ~~xx~~  
*Ham.* I humbly thank you; well, well, well.  
*Oph.* My lord, I have remembrances of yours,  
 That I have longed long to re-deliver;  
 I pray you, now receive them. xx

*Ham.* No, not I;  
 I never gave you aught.  
*Oph.* My honour'd lord, you know right well you  
 did;  
 And, with them, words of so sweet breath composed  
 As made the things more rich: their perfume lost,  
 Take these again; for to the noble mind 100  
Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind.  
 There, my lord.

*Ham.* Ha, ha! are you honest?  
*Oph.* My lord?  
*Ham.* Are you fair?  
*Oph.* What means your lordship?  
*Ham.* That if you be honest and fair, your honesty  
 should admit no discourse to your beauty.

*Oph.* Could beauty, my lord, have better commerce  
than with honesty ? 110

*Ham.* Ay, truly ; for the power of beauty will  
sooner transform honesty from what it is to a bawd  
than the force of honesty can translate beauty into his  
likeness : this was sometime a paradox, but now the  
time gives it proof. I did love you once.

*Oph.* Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.

*Ham.* You should not have believed me ; for virtue  
cannot so inoculate our old stock but we shall relish  
of it : I loved you not.

*Oph.* I was the more deceived. 120

*Ham.* Get thee to a nunnery : why wouldst thou  
be a breeder of sinners ? I am myself indifferent  
honest ; but yet I could accuse me of such things that  
it were better my mother had not borne me : I am  
very proud, revengeful, ambitious, with more offences  
at my beck than I have thoughts to put them in,  
imagination to give them shape, or time to act them  
in. What should such fellows as I do crawling be-  
tween earth and heaven ? We are arrant knaves, all ;  
believe none of us. Go thy ways to a nunnery.  
Where's your father ? 131

*Oph.* At home, my lord.

*Ham.* Let the doors be shut upon him, that he may  
play the fool no where but in's own house. Farewell.

*Oph.* O, help him, you sweet heavens !

*Ham.* If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague  
for thy dowry : be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as  
snow, thou shalt not escape calumny. Get thee to a  
nunnery, go : farewell. Or, if thou wilt needs marry,  
marry a fool ; for wise men know well enough what  
monsters you make of them. To a nunnery, go, and  
quickly too. Farewell. 142

*Oph.* O heavenly powers, restore him !

*Ham.* I have heard of your paintings too, well enough ; God has given you one face, and you make yourselves another : you jig, you amble, and you lisp, and nick-name God's creatures, and make your wantonness your ignorance. Go to, I'll no more on't ; it hath made me mad. (I say, we will have no more marriages : those that are married already, all but one, shall live ; the rest shall keep as they are. To a nunnery, go.)

[Exit.]

*Oph.* O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown !  
The courtier's, scholar's, soldier's, eye, tongue, sword ;  
The expectancy and rose of the fair state.  
The glass of fashion and the mould of form,  
The observed of all observers, quite, quite down !  
And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,  
That suck'd the honey of his music vows,  
Now see that noble and most sovereign reason, 160  
Like sweet bells jangled out of tune, and harsh ;  
That unmatch'd form and feature of blown youth  
Blasted with ecstasy : O, woe is me, *thus*  
To have seen what I have seen, see what I see !

Re-enter KING and POLONIUS.

*King.* Love ! his affections do not that way tend ;  
Nor what he spake, though it lack'd form a little,  
Was not like madness. There's something in his soul,  
O'er which his melancholy sits on brood ;  
And I do doubt the hatch and the disclose 170  
Will be some danger : which for to prevent,  
I have in quick determination  
Thus set it down : he shall with speed to England,  
For the demand of our neglected tribute :  
Haply the seas and countries different

With variable objects shall expel  
 This something-settled matter in his heart,  
 Whereon his brains still beating puts him thus  
 From fashion of himself. What think you on't ?

*Pol.* It shall do well : but yet do I believe  
 The origin and commencement of his grief 180  
 Sprung from neglected love. How now, Ophelia !  
 You need not tell us what Lord Hamlet said ;  
 We heard it all. My lord, do as you please ;  
 But, if you hold it fit, after the play  
 Let his queen mother all alone entreat him  
 To show his grief : let her be round with him ;  
 And I'll be placed, so please you, in the ear  
 Of all their conference. If she find him not,  
 To England send him, or confine him where  
 Your wisdom best shall think.

*King.* It shall be so : 190  
Madness in great ones must not unwatch'd go. ✓  
 [Exeunt.

SCENE II. *A hall in the castle.* Enter HAMLET  
 and Players dramaticke Keops

*Ham.* Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue : but if you mouth it, as many of your players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus, but use all gently ; for in the very torrent, tempest, and, as I may say, the whirlwind of passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to

split the ears of the groundlings, who for the most part are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb-shows and noise : I would have such a fellow whipped for o'erdoing Termagant ; it out-herods Herod : pray you, avoid it.

15  
*a violent death or Boisterous merriment*

*First Play.* I warrant your honour.

*Ham.* Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor : suit the action to the word, the word to the action ; with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature : for any thing so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature ; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure. Now this overdone, or come tardy off, though it make the unskilful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve ; the censure of the which one must in your allowance o'erweigh a whole theatre of others. O, there be players that I have seen play, and heard others praise, and that highly, not to speak it profanely, that, neither having the accent of Christians nor the gait of Christian, pagan, nor man, have so strutted and bellowed that I have thought some of nature's journeymen had made men and not made thef<sup>n</sup> well, they imitated humanity so abominably.

*First Play.* I hope we have reformed that indifferently with us, sir.

38

*Ham.* O, reform it altogether. And let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them ; for there be of them that will themselves laugh, to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too ; though, in the mean time, some necessary question of the play be then to be considered : that's

villainous, and shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it. Go, make you ready.

[*Exeunt Players.*]

*Enter POLONIUS, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.*

How now, my lord ! will the king hear this piece of work ?

*Pol.* And the queen too, and that presently.

*Ham.* Bid the players make haste. [*Exit Polonius.*]

Will you two help to hasten them. 51

*Ros.* } We will, my lord ?  
*Guil.* }

[*Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.*]

*Ham.* What ho ! Horatio.

*Enter HORATIO.*

*Hor.* Here, sweet lord, at your service.

*Ham.* Horatio, thou art e'en as just a man  
As e'er my conversation coped withal.

*Hor.* O, my dear lord,—

*Ham.* Nay, do not think I flatter ;  
For what advancement <sup>new</sup> may I hope from thee  
That no revenue hast but thy good spirits,  
To feed and clothe thee ? Why should the poor be  
flatter'd ? 60

No, let the candied tongue lick absurd pomp,  
And crook the pregnant <sup>new</sup> hinges of the knee  
Where thrift may follow fawning. Dost thou hear ?  
Since my dear soul was mistress of her choice  
And could of men distinguish, her election  
Hath seal'd thee for herself ; for thou has been  
As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing,  
A man that fortune's buffets and rewards  
Hast ta'en with equal thanks : and blest are those

Whose blood and judgement are so well commingled,  
 That they are not a pipe for fortune's finger      71  
 To sound what stop she please. Give me that man  
That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him  
In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,  
As I do thee. — Something too much of this.—  
 There is a play to-night before the king ;  
One scene of it comes near the circumstance  
 Which I have told thee of my father's death :  
 I prithee when thou seest that act afoot,  
Even with the very comment of thy soul      80  
Observe mine uncle : if his occulted guilt      *occulted*  
Do not itself unkennel in one speech,      *latent*  
It is a damned ghost that we have seen,      *hidden*  
And my imaginations are as foul      *worshd.*  
As Vulcan's stithy. Give him needful note ;      *rigu*  
For I mine eyes will rivet to his face,  
 And after we will both our judgements join  
 In censure of his seeming.

*Hor.* Well, my lord :  
 If he steal aught the whilst this play is playing,  
 And 'scape detecting, I will pay the theft.      90

*Ham.* They are coming to the play ; I must be idle :  
 Get you a place.

*Danish march.* *A flourish.* Enter KING, QUEEN,  
 POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDEN-  
 STERN, and others.

*King.* How fares our cousin Hamlet ? *was suffered by*  
*Ham.* Excellent, i' faith ; of the chameleon's dish :  
 I eat the air, promise-crammed : you cannot feed  
capons so.

*King.* I have nothing with this answer, Hamlet ;  
 these words are not mine.

*Ham.* No, nor mine now. [To Polonius] My lord, you played once i' the university, you say ? 100

*Pol.* That did I, my lord ; and was accounted a good actor.

*Ham.* What did you enact ? *That was much to the purpose*

*Pol.* I did enact Julius Cæsar : I was killed i' the Capitol ; Brutus killed me.

*Ham.* It was a brute part of him to kill so capital a calf there. Be the players ready ?

*Ros.* Ay, my lord ; they stay upon your patience.

*Queen.* Come hither, my dear Hamlet, sit by me.

*Ham.* No, good mother, here's metal more attractive. *Ophelia* ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> 111

*Pol.* [To the King] O, ho ! do you mark that ?

*Ham.* Lady, shall I lie in your lap ?

[Lying down at Ophelia's feet.]

*Oph.* No, my lord.

*Ham.* I mean, my head upon your lap ?

*Oph.* You are merry, my lord.

*Ham.* Who, I ?

*Oph.* Ay, my lord. *only to amuse you*

*Ham.* O God, your only jig-maker. What should a man do but be merry ? for, look you, how cheerfully my mother looks, and my father died within these two hours. 122

*Oph.* Nay, 'tis twice two months, my lord.

*Ham.* So long ? Nay then, let the devil wear black, for I'll have a suit of sables. O heavens ! die two months ago, and not forgotten yet ? Then there's hope a great man's memory may outlive his life half a year : but, by'r lady, he must build churches, then ; or else shall he suffer not thinking on, with the hobby-horse, whose epitaph is " For, O, for, O, the hobby-horse is forgot." 131

*Hautboys play. The dumb-show enters.*

Enter a King and a Queen very lovingly ; the Queen embracing him, and he her. She kneels, and makes show of protestation unto him. He takes her up, and declines his head upon her neck : lays him down upon a bank of flowers : she, seeing him asleep, leaves him. Anon comes in a fellow, takes off his crown, kisses it, and pours poison in the King's ears, and exit. The Queen returns ; finds the King dead, and makes passionate action. The Poisoner, with some two or three Mutes, comes in again, seeming to lament with her. The dead body is carried away. The Poisoner wooes the Queen with gifts : she seems loth and unwilling awhile, but in the end accepts his love. [Exeunt.

*Oph.* What means this, my lord ?

*Ham.* Marry, this is miching mallecho ; it means mischief. <sup>a secret mischif</sup>

*Oph.* Belike this show imports the argument of the play. <sup>plot</sup>

*Enter Prologue.*

*Ham.* We shall know by this fellow : the players keep counsel ; they'll tell all.

*Oph.* Will he tell us what this show meant ? <sup>139</sup>

*Ham.* Ay, or any show that you'll show him : be not you ashamed to show, he'll not shame to tell you what it means.

*Oph.* You are naught, you are naught : I'll mark the play.

*Pro.* For us, and for our tragedy,  
Here stooping to your clemency,  
We beg your hearing patiently. [Exit.

*Ham.* Is this a prologue, or the posy of a ring ?

*Oph.* 'Tis brief, my lord.

*Ham.* As woman's love.

150

*Enter two Players, King and Queen.*

*P. King.* Full thirty times hath Phœbus' cart gone  
 round <sup>Sea</sup> ~~an m with haselafwys~~  
 Neptune's salt wash and Tellus' orbed ground, ~~earth~~  
 And thirty dozen moons with borrow'd sheen <sup>30 x 12</sup>  
 About the world have times twelve thirties been,  
 Since love our hearts and Hymen did our hands <sup>Jh</sup>  
 Unite commutual in most sacred bands. <sup>b</sup>

*P. Queen.* So many journeys may the sun and moon  
 Make us again count o'er ere love be done !

But, woe is me, you are so sick of late,  
 So far from cheer and from your former state, <sup>anxym about</sup> 160  
 That I distrust you. Yet, though I distrust,  
 Discomfort you, my lord, it nothing must ;  
 For women's fear and love holds quantity ;  
 In neither aught, or in extremity.  
 Now, what my love is, proof hath made you know ;  
 And as my love is sized, my fear is so ;  
 Where love is great, the littlest doubts are fear ;  
 Where little fears grow great, great love grows there.

*P. King.* 'Faith, I must leave thee, love, and shortly  
 too ; <sup>active powers</sup> My operant powers their functions leave to do : 170  
 And thou shalt live in this fair world behind,  
 Honour'd, beloved ; and haply one as kind  
 For husband shalt thou —

*P. Queen.* O, confound the rest !  
 Such love must needs be treason in my breast :  
 In second husband let me be accurst !  
 None wed the second but who kill'd the first.

HAMLET *Bitter by the King* [ACT III]

*Ham.* [Aside] Wormwood, wormwood.

*P. Queen.* The instances that second marriage move  
Are base respects of thrift, but none of love :

A second time I kill my husband dead, 180  
When second husband kisses me in bed.

*P. King.* I do believe you think what now you  
speak ;

But what we do determine oft we break.

Purpose is but the slave to memory,

Of violent birth, but poor validity :

Which now, like fruit unripe, sticks on the tree ;

But fall, unshaken, when they mellow be.

Most necessary 'tis that we forget

To pay ourselves what to ourselves is debt :

What to ourselves in passion we propose, 190

The passion ending, doth the purpose lose.

The violence of either grief or joy

Their own enactures with themselves destroy :

Where joy most revels, grief doth most lament ;

Grief joys, joy grieves, on slender accident.

This world is not for aye, nor 'tis not strange

That even our loves should with our fortunes change ;

For 'tis a question left us yet to prove,

Whether love lead fortune, or else fortune love.

The great man down, you mark his favourite flies ;

The poor advanced makes friends of enemies. 201

And hitherto doth love on fortune tend ;

For who not needs shall never lack a friend,

And who in want a hollow friend doth try,

Directly seasons him his enemy.

But, orderly to end where I begun,

Our wills and fates do so contrary run

That our devices still are overthrown ;

Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of our own :

So think thou wilt no second husband wed ;      210  
But die thy thoughts when thy first lord is dead.

*P. Queen.* Nor earth to me give food, nor heaven light !

Sport and repose lock from me day and night !  
 To desperation turn my trust and hope !

An anchor's cheer in prison be my scope ! *feel*  
Each opposite that blanks the face of joy *w.*

Meet what I would have well and it destroy !  
 Both here and hence pursue me lasting strife,  
 If, once a widow, ever I be wife !

*Ham.* If she should break it now !      220

*P. King.* 'Tis deeply sworn. Sweet, leave me here awhile ;

My spirits grow dull, and fain I would beguile  
 The tedious day with sleep.      [Sleeps.]

*P. Queen.* Sleep rock thy brain ;  
 And never come mischance between us twain ! [Exit.]

*Ham.* Madam, how like you this play ?

*Queen.* The lady doth protest too much, methinks.

*Ham.* O, but she'll keep her word.

*King.* Have you heard the argument ? Is there no offence in't ?

*Ham.* No, no, they do but jest, poison in jest ; no offence i' the world.      231

*King.* What do you call the play ?

*Ham.* The Mouse-trap. Marry, how ? Tropically.  
 This play is the image of a murder done in Vienna :  
 Gonzago is the duke's name ; his wife, Baptista : you shall see anon ; 'tis a knavish piece of work : but what o' that ? your majesty and we that have free souls, it touches us not : let the galled jade wince, our withers are unwrung.

*Enter LUCIANUS.*

This is one Lucianus, nephew to the king. 240

*Oph.* You are as good as a chorus, my lord.

*Ham.* I could interpret between you and your love, if I could see the puppets dallying.

*Oph.* Still better, and worse.

*Ham.* So you must take your husbands. Begin, murderer ; leave thy damnable faces, and begin. Come : "the croaking raven doth bellow for revenge."

*Luc.* Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and time agreeing ; *Spondeo (Syllable)*  
Confederate season, else no creature seeing ;  
 Thou mixture rank, of midnight weeds collected, 250  
 With Hecate's ban thrice blasted, thrice infected,  
 Thy natural magic and dire property  
 On wholesome life usurp immediately.

[*Pours, the poison into the sleeper's ears.*

*Ham.* He poisons him i' the garden for's estate. His name's Gonzago : the story is extant, and writ in choice Italian : you shall see anon how the murderer gets the love of Gonzago's wife.

*Oph.* The king rises. *Line a 8'*

*Ham.* What, frightened with false fire !

*Queen.* How fares my lord ? 260

*Pol.* Give o'er the play.

*King.* Give me some light : away !

*All.* Lights, lights, lights !

[*Exeunt all but Hamlet and Horatio.*

*Ham.* Why, let the stricken deer go weep, *wounded*,

The hart ungalled play ;

For some must watch, while some must sleep :

So runs the world away.

Would not this, sir, and a forest of feathers—if the rest of my fortunes turn Turk with me—with two Provincial

roses on my razed shoes, get me a fellowship in a cry  
of players, sir ?

271

*Hor.* Half a share.

*Ham.* A whole one, I.

For thou dost know, O Damon dear,

This realm dismantled was

Of Jove himself ; and now reigns here

A very, very—pajock.

*Hor.* You might have rhymed.

*Ham.* O good Horatio, I'll take the ghost's word  
for a thousand pound. Didst perceive ?

280

*Hor.* Very well, my lord.

*Ham.* Upon the talk of poisoning ?

*Hor.* I did very well note him.

*Ham.* Ah, ah ! Come, some music ! come, the  
recorders ! *a wild flute*

For if the king like not the comedy,

Why then, belike, he likes it not, perdy.

Come, some music !

*Re-enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.*

*Guil.* Good my lord, vouchsafe me a word with you.

*Ham.* Sir, a whole history.

290

*Guil.* The king, sir,—

*Ham.* Ay, sir, what of him ?

*Guil.* Is in his retirement marvellous distempered.

*Ham.* With drink, sir ?

*Guil.* No, my lord, rather with choler.

*angry & chol*

*Ham.* Your wisdom should show itself more richer  
to signify this to his doctor ; for, for me to put him to his  
purgation would perhaps plunge him into far more  
choler.

*Guil.* Good my lord, put your discourse into some  
frame and start not so wildly from my affair.

301

*Ham.* I am tame, sir : pronounce.

*Guil.* The queen, your mother, in most great affliction of spirit, hath sent me to you.

*Ham.* You are welcome.

*Guil.* Nay, good my lord, this courtesy is not of the right breed. If it shall please you to make me a wholesome answer, I will do your mother's commandment : if not, your pardon and my return shall be the end of my business. 310

*Ham.* Sir, I cannot.

*Guil.* What, my lord ?

*Ham.* Make you a wholesome answer ; my wit's diseased : but, sir, such answer as I can make, you shall command ; or, rather, as you say, my mother : therefore no more, but to the matter : my mother, you say,—

*Ros.* Then thus she says ; your behaviour hath struck her into amazement and admiration. *not appr.*

*Ham.* O wonderful son, that can so astonish a mother ! But is there no sequel at the heels of this mother's admiration ? Impart. *presently* 321

*Ros.* She desires to speak with you in her closet, ere you go to bed. *in closet*

*Ham.* We shall obey, were she ten times our mother. Have you any further trade with us ? *Wlk*

*Ros.* My lord, you once did love me.

*Ham.* So I do still, by these pickers and stealers. *to*

*Ros.* Good my lord, what is your cause of distemper ? You do, surely, bar the door upon your own liberty, if you deny your griefs to your friend. 330

*Ham.* Sir, I lack advancement.

*Ros.* How can that be, when you have the voice of the king himself for your succession in Denmark ?

*Ham.* Ay, sir, but "While the grass grows,"—the proverb is something musty.

*Re-enter Players with recorders.*

O, the recorders ! let me see one. To withdraw with you :—why do you go about to recover the wind of me, as if you would drive me into a toil ? *trap*

*Guil.* O, my lord, if my duty be too bold, my love is too unmannerly. 340

*Ham.* I do not well understand that. Will you play upon this pipe ?

*Guil.* My lord, I cannot.

*Ham.* I pray you.

*Guil.* Believe me, I cannot.

*Ham.* I do beseech you.

*Guil.* I know no touch of it, my lord.

*Ham.* 'Tis as easy as lying : govern these vantages with your fingers and thumb, give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent music. Look you, these are the stops. 351

*Guil.* But these cannot I command to any utterance of harmony : I have not the skill.

*Ham.* Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing you make of me ! You would play upon me ; you would seem to know my stops ; you would pluck out the heart of my mystery ; you would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass : and there is much music, excellent voice, in this little organ ; yet cannot you make it speak. 'Sblood, do you think I am easier to be played on than a pipe ? Call me what instrument you will, though you can fret me, yet you cannot play upon me. 363

*Enter POLONIUS.*

God bless you, sir !

*Pol.* My lord, the queen would speak with you, and presently.

*Ham.* Do you see yonder cloud that's almost in shape of a camel?

*Pol.* By the mass, and 'tis like a camel, indeed.

*Ham.* Methinks it is like a weasel.

370

*Pol.* It is backed like a weasel.

*Ham.* Or like a whale?

*Pol.* Very like a whale.

*Ham.* Then I will come to my mother by and by.

[*Aside*] They fool me to the top of my bent. I will come by and by.

*Pol.* I will say so.

*Ham.* By and by is easily said. [*Exit Polonius.*] Leave me, friends. ~~end of night~~ [Exeunt all but Hamlet.]

'Tis now the very witching time of night, 380  
When churchyards yawn and hell itself breathes out Contagion to this world : now could I drink hot blood, And do such bitter business as the day

Would quake to look on. Soft ! now to my mother.

O heart, lose not thy nature ; let not ever <sup>longing</sup> The soul of Nero enter this firm bosom : <sup>utter his wretched</sup> Let me be cruel, not unnatural :

I will speak daggers to her, but use none ~~violent~~  
~~My tongue and soul in this be hypocrites ; words~~ How in my words soever she be shent, reproved 390  
To give them seals never, my soul, consent ! [Exit.]

SCENE III. *A room in the castle. Enter KING, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.*

*King.* I like him not, nor stands it safe with us To let his madness range. Therefore prepare you ; I your commission will forthwith dispatch,

And he to England shall along with you :  
 The terms of our estate may not endure  
 Hazard so near us as doth hourly grow  
 Out of his lunacies.

*Guil.* We will ourselves provide :  
 Most holy and religious fear it is  
 To keep those many many bodies safe  
 That live and feed upon your majesty.

10

*Ros.* The single and peculiar life is bound,  
 With all the strength and armour of the mind,  
 To keep itself from noyance ; but much more  
 That spirit upon whose weal depend and rest  
 The lives of many. The cease of majesty  
 Dies not alone ; but, like a gulf, doth draw  
 What's near it with it : it is a massy wheel,  
 Fix'd on the summit of the highest mount,  
 To whose huge spokes ten thousand lesser things  
 Are mortised and adjoin'd ; which, when it falls, 20  
 Each small annexment, petty consequence,  
 Attends the boisterous ruin. Never alone  
 Did the king sigh, but with a general groan.

*King.* Arm you, I pray you, to this speedy voyage ;  
 For we will fetters put upon this fear,  
 Which now goes too free-footed.

*Guil.*  
*Ros.*

We will haste us.

[*Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.*

*Enter POLONIUS.*

*Pol.* My lord, he's going to his mother's closet :  
 Behind the arras I'll convey myself,  
 To hear the process ; I'll warrant she'll tax him  
 home :  
 And, as you said, and wisely was it said,

30

'Tis meet that some more audience than a mother,  
Since nature makes them partial, should o'erhear  
The speech, of vantage. Fare you well, my liege :  
I'll call upon you ere you go to bed,  
And tell you what I know.

King.

Thanks, dear my lord.

*bare*

[Exit Polonius.]

O, my offence is rank, it smells to heaven ;  
It hath the primal eldest curse upon't,  
A brother's murder. Pray can I not,  
Though inclination be as sharp as will :  
My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent ; 33 - 40  
And, like a man to double business bound,  
I stand in pause where I shall first begin,  
And both neglect. What if this cursed hand  
Were thicker than itself with brother's blood,  
Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens  
To wash it white as snow ? Whereto serves mercy  
But to confront the visage of offence ?  
And what's in prayer but this two-fold force,  
To be forestalled ere we come to fall,  
Or pardon'd being down ? Then I'll look up ; 50  
My fault is past. But, O, what form of prayer  
Can serve my turn ? "Forgive me my foul murder" ?  
That cannot be ; since I am still possess'd  
Of those effects for which I did the murder,  
My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen,  
May one be pardon'd and retain the offence ?  
In the corrupted currents of this world  
Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice,  
And oft 'tis seen the wicked prize itself  
Buys out the law : but 'tis not so above ; 60  
There is no shuffling, there the action lies  
In his true nature : and we ourselves compell'd,

Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults,  
 To give in evidence. What then ? what rests ?  
 Try what repentance can : what can it not ?  
 Yet what can it when one can not repent ?  
 O wretched state ! O bosom black as death !  
 O limed soul, that, struggling to be free,  
 Art more engaged ! Help, angels ! Make assay !  
 Bow, stubborn knees ; and, heart with strings of steel,  
 Be soft as sinews of the new-born babe ! 71  
 All may be well. ~~muscles~~ [Retires and kneels.]

Enter HAMLET.

*Ham.* Now might I do it pat, now he is praying ;  
 And now I'll do it. And so he goes to heaven ;  
 And so am I revenged. That would be scann'd :  
 A villain kills my father ; and for that,  
 I, his sole son, do this same villain send wisper  
 To heaven.  
 O, this is hire and salary, not revenge.  
 He took my father grossly, full of bread ; unKnew 80  
 With all his crimes broad blown, as flush as May ;  
 And how his audit stands who knows save heaven ?  
 But in our circumstance and course of thought,  
 'Tis heavy with him : and am I then revenged,  
 To take him in the purging of his soul, purify !  
 When he is fit and season'd for his passage ?  
 No !  
 Up, sword ; and know thou a more horrid hent :  
 When he is drunk asleep, or in his rage,  
 Or in the incestuous pleasure of his bed ;  
 At gaming, swearing, or about some act wices !  
 That has no relish of salvation in't ;  
 Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven,  
 And that his soul may be as damn'd and black

As hell, whereto it goes. My mother stays :  
This physic but prolongs thy sickly days. [Exit.]

*King.* [Rising.] (My words fly up, my thoughts remain below :)  
Words without thoughts never to heaven go. [Exit.]

*was my thoughts are mean  
from west egypt*

SCENE IV. *The Queen's closet.* Enter QUEEN and POLONIUS.

*Pol.* He will come straight. Look you lay home to him :

Tell him his pranks have been too broad to bear with,  
And that your grace hath screen'd and stood between  
Much heat and him. I'll sconce me even here.

Pray you, be round with him. *Hold*

*Ham.* [Within.] Mother, mother, mother !

*Queen.* I'll warrant you,  
Fear me not : withdraw, I hear him coming.

[*Polonius hides behind the arras.*

*Enter HAMLET.*

*Ham.* Now, mother, what's the matter ?

*Queen.* Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.

*Ham.* Mother, you have my father much offended.

*Queen.* Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.

*Ham.* Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue.

*Queen.* Why, how now, Hamlet ! 13

*Ham.* What's the matter now ?

*Queen.* Have you forgot me ? *Cross*

*Ham.* No, by the rood, not so :

You are the queen, your husband's brother's wife ;

And—would it were not so ! —you are my mother.

*Queen.* Nay, then, I'll set those to you that can speak.

*Ham.* Come, come, and sit you down ; you sh  
not budge ; move very ~~un~~ <sup>in</sup> ~~bending~~ <sup>your</sup> ground origina  
You go not till I set you up a glass  
Where you may see the inmost part of you.

*Queen.* What wilt thou do ? thou wilt not murd  
me ? *Wife* ~~face~~

Help, help, ho !

*Pol.* [Behind.] What, ho ! help, help, help !

*Ham.* [Drawing.] How now ! a rat ? Dead, for  
ducat, dead ! [Makes a pass through the arr

*Pol.* [Behind.] O, I am slain ! [Falls and di

*Queen.* O me, what hast thou done ?

*Ham.* Nay, I know not

Is it the king ?

*Queen.* O, what a rash and bloody deed is this !

*Ham.* A bloody deed ! almost as bad, good moth  
As kill a king, and marry with his brother.

*Queen.* As kill a king !

*Ham.* Ay, lady, 'twas my word.

[Lifts up the arras and discovers Poloni  
Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell !  
I took thee for thy better : take thy fortune ;  
Thou find'st to be too busy is some danger.

Leave wringing of your hands : peace ! sit you dow  
and let me wring your heart ; for so I shall,  
If it be made of penetrable stuff,  
If damned custom have not brass'd it so *blasted* it  
That it be proof and bulwark against sense.

*Queen.* What have I done, that thou darest wag t  
tongue *Scornfully and fierce*

In noise so rude against me ?

*Ham.* Such an act

That blurs the grace and blush of modesty,  
Calls virtue hypocrite, takes off the rose

From the fair forehead of an innocent love  
 And sets a blister there, makes marriage-vows  
 As false as dicers' oaths : O, such a deed  
 As from the body of contraction plucks  
 The very soul, and sweet religion makes  
 A rhapsody of words : heaven's face doth glow ;  
 Yea, this solidity and compound mass, earth  
 With tristful visage, as against the doom,<sup>54</sup> ~~ref: to Day & Judge~~  
 Is thought-sick at the act. <sup>50</sup>

Queen.

Ah me, what act,

That roars so loud, and thunders in the index? <sup>beg.</sup>

Ham. Look here, upon this picture, and on this,  
The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.  
 See, what a grace was seated on this brow ; <sup>55</sup> God of  
Hyperion's curls ; the front of Jove himself ;  
An eye like Mars, to threaten and command ;  
 A station like the herald Mercury <sup>the messenger of</sup>  
 New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill ; <sup>56</sup> God from an  
 A combination and a form indeed, <sup>feeling</sup> <sup>60</sup>  
 Where every god did seem to set his seal,  
 To give the world assurance of a man :

This was your husband. Look you now, what follows :  
Here is your husband ; like a mildew'd ear, A kind  
Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes ?  
Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed,  
 And batten on this moor ? Ha ! have you eyes ?  
You cannot call it love ; for at your age  
The hey-day in the blood is tame, it's humble, <sup>69</sup>  
 And waits upon the judgement : and what judgement  
 Would step from this to this ? Sense, sure, you have,  
 Else could you not have motion ; but sure, that sense  
 Is apoplex'd ; for madness would not err,  
 Nor sense to ecstasy was ne'er so thrall'd  
 But it reserved some quantity of choice,

To serve in such a difference. What devil was't  
 That thus hath cozen'd you at hoodman blind?  
Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight,  
Ears without hands or eyes, smelling sans all,  
 Or but a sickly part of one true sense  
 Could not so mope. foolish  
 O shame ! where is thy blush ? Rebellious hell,  
If thou canst mutine in a matron's bones,  
To flaming youth let virtue be as wax,  
And melt in her own fire : proclaim no shame  
When the compulsive ardour gives the charge,  
 Since frost itself as actively doth burn,  
 And reason pandars will.

*Queen.* O Hamlet, speak no mor  
 Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul ;  
 And there I see such black and grained spots <sup>depth</sup>  
 As will not leave their tinct. <sup>Colours</sup>  
 These words, like daggers, enter in mine ears ;  
 No more, sweet Hamlet !

*Ham.* A murderer and a villai  
A slave that is not twentieth part the tithe <sup>L of u</sup>  
Of your precedent lord ; a vice of kings ; <sup>10</sup> buffon  
 A cutpurse of the empire and the rule,  
 That from a shelf the precious diadem stole,  
 And put it in his pocket ! <sup>ensign of roy</sup>

*Queen.* No more !  
*Ham.* A king of shreds and patches,—

### Enter Ghost

Save me, and hover o'er me with your wings,  
 You heavenly guards ! What would your gracie  
 figure ?

*Queen.* Alas, he's mad !

*Ham.* Do you not come your tardy son to chide,  
 That, lapsed in time and passion, lets go by  
 The important acting of your dread command ?

O, say !

*Ghost.* Do not forget : this visitation  
 Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.  
 But, look, amazement on thy mother sits :  
 O, step between her and her fighting soul : . . . . . 110  
 Conceit in weakest bodies strongest works :  
 Speak to her, Hamlet.

*Ham.* How is it with you, lady ?

*Queen.* Alas, how is't with you,  
 That you do bend your eye on vacancy,  
 And with the incorporal air do hold discourse ?  
 Forth at your eyes your spirits wildly peep ;  
 And, as the sleeping soldiers in the alarm,  
 Your bedded hair, like life in excrements, <sup>nails & hair</sup>  
 Starts up, and stands on end. O gentle son,  
 Upon the heat and flame of thy distemper 120  
 Sprinkle cool patience. Whereon do you look ?

*Ham.* On him, on him ! Look you, how pale he  
 glares ! <sup>will be active</sup>  
 His form and cause conjoin'd, preaching to stones,  
 Would make them capable. Do not look upon me ;  
 Lest with this piteous action you convert  
 My stern effects : then what I have to do  
 Will want true colour ; tears perchance for blood.

*Queen.* To whom do you speak this ?

*Ham.* Do you see nothing there ?

*Queen.* Nothing at all ; yet all that is I see.

*Ham.* Nor did you nothing hear ?

*Queen.* No, nothing but ourselves.

*Ham.* Why, look you there ! look, how it steals  
 away !

131

My father, in his habit as he lived !

Look, where he goes, even now, out at the portal!

[Exit Ghost.

*Queen.* This is the very coinage of your brain :  
This bodiless creation ecstasy <sup>bro'out "</sup>  
Is very cunning in. madness <sup>fan'g'</sup>.

*Ham.* Ecstasy !

My pulse, as yours, doth temperately keep time,  
And makes as healthful music : it is not madness  
That I have utter'd : bring me to the test,  
And I the matter will re-word : which madness <sup>140</sup>  
Would gambol from. Mother, for love of grace,  
Lay not that flattering unction to your soul,  
That not your trespass, but my madness speaks :  
It will but skin and film the ulcerous place,  
Whiles rank corruption, mining all within,  
Infects unseen. Confess yourself to heaven ;  
Repent what's past ; avoid what is to come ;  
And do not spread the compost on the weeds,  
To make them ranker. Forgive me this my virtue ;  
For in the fatness of these pursy times <sup>150</sup>  
Virtue itself of vice must pardon beg, <sup>fan'</sup>  
Yea, curb and woo for leave to do him good.

*Queen.* O Hamlet, thou hast cleft my heart in twain.

*Ham.* O, throw away the worser part of it,  
And live the purer with the other half.

Good night : but go not to mine uncle's bed ;  
Assume a virtue, if you have it not.

That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat,  
Of habits devil, is angel yet in this,  
That to the use of actions fair and good <sup>160</sup>  
He likewise gives a frock or livery,  
That aptly is put on.

For use almost can change the stamp of nature,

And either master the devil, or throw him out  
With wondrous potency. Once more, good night :  
 And when you are desirous to be bless'd,  
 I'll blessing beg of you. For this same lord,

[Pointing to Polonius.]

I do repent : but heaven hath pleased it so,  
 To punish me with this and this with me, ~~Polonius~~<sup>170</sup>  
 That I must be their scourge and minister.  
 I will bestow him, and will answer well  
 The death I gave him. So, again, good night.  
I must be cruel, only to be kind :  
Thus bad begins and worse remains behind.  
 One word more, good lady.

*Queen.*

What shall I do ?

*Ham.* Not this, by no means, that I bid you do :  
Let the bloat king tempt you again to bed ;  
Pinch wanton on your cheek ; call you his mouse ;  
Make you to ravel all this matter out,  
That I essentially am not in madness,<sup>180</sup>  
But mad in craft. 'Twere good you let him know ;  
For who, that's but a queen, fair, sober, wise,  
Would from a ~~paddock~~, from a bat, a gib, ~~lone cat~~  
Such dear concernings hide ? who would do so ?  
No, in despite of sense and secrecy,  
Unpeg the basket on the house's top,  
Let the birds fly, and, like the famous ape,  
To try conclusions, in the basket creep,  
And break your own neck down.

*Queen.* Be thou assured, if words be made of breath,  
 And breath of life, I have no life to breathe  
 What thou hast said to me.

*Ham.* I must to England ; you know that ?

*Queen.*

Alack,

I had forgot : 'tis so concluded on.

*Ham.* There's letters seal'd : and my two school-fellows, mandate letter.  
 Whom I will trust as I will adders fang'd,  
 They bear the mandate ; they must sweep my way,  
 And marshal me to knavery. Let it work ;  
For 'tis the sport to have the enginer  
Hoist with his own petar : and't shall go hard      200  
 But I will delve one yard below their mines,  
 And blow them at the moon : O, 'tis most sweet,  
 When in one line two crafts directly meet.  
 This man shall set me packing : hurting n. of  
 I'll lug the guts into the neighbour room.  
 Mother, good night. Indeed this counsellor  
 Is now most still, most secret and most grave,  
 Who was in life a foolish prating knave.  
 Come, sir, to draw toward an end with you.  
 Good night, mother.      210

[*Exeunt severally ; Hamlet dragging in Polonius.*

## ACT IV

SCENE I. *A room in the castle.* Enter KING,  
QUEEN, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.

*King.* There's matter in these sighs, these profound  
heaves : *few a man's got*  
You must translate : 'tis fit we understand them.  
Where is your son ?

*Queen.* Bestow this place on us a little while.

[*Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.*]

Ah, mine own lord, what have I seen to-night !

*King.* What, Gertrude ? How does Hamlet ?

*Queen.* Mad as the sea and wind, when both con-  
tend

Which is the mightier : in his lawless fit,  
Behind the arras hearing something stir,  
*Whips* out his rapier, cries, "A rat, a rat ! "      10  
And, in this brainish apprehension, kills  
The unseen good old man.

*King.* O heavy deed !

It had been so with us, had we been there :

His liberty is full of threats to all ;

To you yourself, to us, to every one.

Alas, how shall this bloody deed be answer'd ?

It will be laid to us, whose providence

Should have kept short, restrain'd, and out of haunt,  
This mad young man : but so much was our love,  
We would not understand what was most fit ;      20

But, like the owner of a foul disease,  
To keep it from divulging, let it feed  
Even on the pith of life. Where is he gone ?

*Queen.* To draw apart the body he hath kill'd :  
O'er whom his very madness, like some ore  
Among a mineral of metals base,  
Shows itself pure ; he weeps for what is done.

*King.* O Gertrude, come away !  
The sun no sooner shall the mountains touch,  
But we will ship him hence ; and this vile deed      30  
We must, with all our majesty and skill,  
Both countenance and excuse. Ho, Guildenstern !

*Re-enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.*

Friends both, go join you with some further aid :  
Hamlet in madness hath Polonius slain,  
And from his mother's closet hath he dragg'd him :  
Go seek him out ; speak fair, and bring the body  
Into the chapel. I pray you, haste in this.

[*Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.*

Come, Gertrude, we'll call up our wisest friends ;  
And let them know, both what we mean to do,  
And what's untimely done : so, haply, slander,      40  
Whose whisper o'er the world's diameter,  
As level as the cannon to his blank,  
Transports his poison'd shot, may miss our name,  
And hit the woundless air. O, come away !  
My soul is full of discord and dismay.      [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *Another room in the castle. Enter HAMLET.*

*Ham.* Safely stowed.

*Ros.* }  
*Guil.* } [*Within*] Hamlet ! Lord Hamlet !

*Ham.* But soft, what noise? who calls on Hamlet? O, here they come.

*Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.*

*Ros.* What have you done, my lord, with the dead body?

*Ham.* Compounded it with dust, whereto 'tis kin. *Dust it in art and bidant!*

*Ros.* Tell us where 'tis, that we may take it thence, And bear it to the chapel.

*Ham.* Do not believe it.

10

*Ros.* Believe what?

*Ham.* That I can keep your counsel and not mine own. Besides, to be demanded of a sponge! what replication should be made by the son of a king?

*Ros.* Take you me for a sponge, my lord?

*Ham.* Ay, sir, that soaks up the king's countenance, his rewards, his authorities. But such officers do the king best service in the end: he keeps them, like an ape doth nuts, in the corner of his jaw; first mouthed, to be last swallowed: when he needs what you have gleaned, it is but squeezing you, and, sponge, you shall be dry again.

22

*Ros.* I understand you not, my lord.

*Ham.* I am glad of it: a knavish speech sleeps in a foolish ear.

*Ros.* My lord, you must tell us where the body is, and go with us to the king.

*Ham.* The body is with the king, but the king is not with the body. The king is a thing—

*Guil.* A thing, my lord!

30

*Ham.* Of nothing: bring me to him. Hide fox, and all after. *[Exeunt.]*

*allusion to the game of Hide & Seek*

**SCENE III.** *Another room in the castle.* Enter KING,  
attended.

*King.* I have sent to seek him, and to find the body.  
How dangerous is it that this man goes loose !  
Yet must not we put the strong law on him :  
He's loved of the distracted multitude, foolish  
Who like not in their judgement, but their eyes :  
And where 'tis so, the offender's scourge is weigh'd,  
But never the offence. To bear all smooth and even,  
This sudden sending him away must seem  
Deliberate pause : diseases desperate grown  
By desperate appliance are relieved,  
Or not at all.  
*Result of deliberation.*

10

Enter ROSENCRANTZ.

How now ! what hath befall'n ?

*Ros.* Where the dead body is bestow'd, my lord,  
We cannot get from him.

*King.* But where is he ?

*Ros.* Without, my lord ; guarded, to know your  
pleasure. *standing*

*King.* Bring him before us.

*Ros.* Ho, Guildenstern ! bring in my lord.

Enter HAMLET and GUILDENSTERN.

*King.* Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius ? →

*Ham.* At supper.

*King.* At supper ! where ?

*Ham.* Not where he eats, but where he is eaten : a  
certain convocation of politic worms are e'en at him.  
Your worm is your only emperor for diet : we fat all  
creatures else to fat us, and we fat ourselves for  
maggots : your fat king and your lean beggar is but

20

variable service, two dishes, but to one table : that's the end.

*King.* Alas, alas !

*Ham.* A man may fish with the worm that hath eat of a king, and eat of the fish that hath fed of that worm.

*King.* What dost thou mean by this ? 31

*Ham.* Nothing but to show you how a king may go a progress through the guts of a beggar.

*King.* Where is Polonius ?

*Ham.* In heaven ; send thither to see : if your messenger find him not there, seek him i' the other place yourself. But indeed, if you find him not within this month, you shall nose him as you go up the stairs into the lobby.

*King.* Go seek him there. [To some Attendants.

*Ham.* He will stay till you come. 41

[Exeunt Attendants.

*King.* Hamlet, this deed, for thine especial safety,— Which we do tender, as we dearly grieve For that which thou hast done,—must send thee hence With fiery quickness : therefore prepare thyself ; The bark is ready, and the wind at help, The associates tend, and every thing is bent For England.

*Ham.* . . . For England !

*King.* Ay, Hamlet.

*Ham.* Good.

*King.* So is it, if thou knew'st our purposes. —

*Ham,* I see a <sup>angry</sup> cherub that sees them. But, come ; for England ! Farewell, dear mother. 51

*King.* Thy loving father, Hamlet.

*Ham.* My mother : father and mother is man and wife ; man and wife is one flesh ; and so, my mother. Come, for England ! [Exit.

*King.* Follow him at foot ; tempt him with speed  
aboard ;  
Delay it not ; I'll have him hence to-night :  
Away ! for every thing is seal'd and done  
That else leans on the affair : pray you, make haste.

[*Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.*]

And, England, if my love thou hold'st at aught—<sup>60</sup>  
As my great power thereof may give thee sense,  
Since yet thy cicatrice looks raw and red <sup>Scars</sup>,  
After the Danish sword, and thy free awe  
Pays homage to us—thou mayst not coldly set  
Our sovereign process ; which imports at full,  
By letters conjuring to that effect,  
The present death of Hamlet. Do it, England ;  
For like the hectic in my blood he rages,  
And thou must cure me : till I know 'tis done, <sup>69</sup>  
Howe'er my haps, my joys were ne'er begun. [*Exit.*]

(<sup>impole</sup>) minor role

SCENE IV. *A plain in Denmark.* Enter FORTINBRAS,<sup>fir</sup>  
a Captain, and Soldiers, marching.

*For.* Go, captain, from me greet the Danish king ;  
Tell him that, by his license, Fortinbras  
Craves the conveyance of a promised march  
Over his kingdom. You know the rendezvous.  
If that his majesty would aught with us,  
We shall express our duty in his eye ;  
And let him know so.

*Cap.* I will do't, my lord.

*For.* Go softly on. [*Exeunt Fortinbras and Soldiers.*]

*Enter HAMLET, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN,  
and others.*

*Ham.* Good sir, whose powers are these ?

*Cap.* They are of Norway, sir.

*Ham.* How purposed, sir, I pray you? *what has he*

*Cap.* Against some part of Poland. *unhappy him for*

*Ham.* Who commands them, sir?

*Cap.* The nephew to old Norway, Fortinbras.

*Ham.* Goes it against the main of Poland, sir,  
Or for some frontier?

*Cap.* Truly to speak, and with no addition,  
We go to gain a little patch of ground  
That hath in it no profit but the name.  
To pay five ducats, five, I would not farm it; *cultivat*  
Nor will it yield to Norway or the Pole  
A ranker rate, should it be sold in fee.

*Ham.* Why, then the Polack never will defend it.

*Cap.* Yes, it is already garrison'd.

*Ham.* Two thousand souls and twenty thousand  
ducats ~~the~~  
Will not debate the question of this straw: *useless qu*  
This is the imposthume of much wealth and peace,  
That inward breaks, and shows no cause without  
Why the man dies. I humbly thank you, sir. <sup>29</sup>

*Cap.* God be wi' you, sir. [Exit.]

*Ros.* Will't please you go, my lord?

*Ham.* I'll be with you straight. Go a little before.

*warn to me* [Exeunt all except Hamlet.]

How all occasions do inform against me,  
And spur my dull revenge! What is a man,  
If his chief good and market of his time  
Be but to sleep and feed? a beast, no more.  
Sure, he that made us with such large discourse, *who*  
Looking before and after, gave us not reason *for*  
That capability and god-like reason  
To fust in us unused. Now, whether it be  
Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple

40

Of thinking too precisely on the event,  
 A thought which, quarter'd, hath but one part wisdom  
 And ever three parts coward, I do not know  
 Why yet I live to say "This thing's to do" ;  
Sith I have cause and will and strength and means  
To do't. Examples gross as earth exhort me :  
 Witness this army of such mass and charge  
 Led by a delicate and tender prince,  
Whose spirit with divine ambition puff'd  
Makes mouths at the invisible event, 50  
Exposing what is mortal and unsure  
To all that fortune, death and danger dare,  
Even for an egg-shell. Rightly to be great  
Is not to stir without great argument,  
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw, <sup>honour</sup> <sub>to</sub>  
When honour's at the stake. How stand I then,  
That have a father kill'd, a mother stain'd,  
Excitements of my reason and my blood,  
And let all sleep ? while, to my shame, I see  
The imminent death of twenty thousand men, 60  
That, for a fantasy and trick of fame,  
Go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot  
Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,  
Which is not tomb enough and continent  
To hide the slain ? O, from this time forth,  
My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth } [Exit.]

SCENE V. *Elsinore. A room in the castle.* Enter  
 QUEEN, HORATIO, and a Gentleman.

Queen. I will not speak with her.

Gent. She is importunate, indeed distract :  
 Her moods will needs be pitied.

Queen. What would she have ?

*Gent.* She speaks much of her father ; says she hears  
There's tricks i' the world ; and hems, and beats her  
heart ;

*Spurns enviously at straws* ; speaks things in doubt,  
That carry but half sense : her speech is nothing,  
Yet the unshaped use of it doth move  
The hearers to collection ; they aim at it,  
And botch the words up fit to their own thoughts ; 10  
Which, as he winks, and nods, and gestures yield  
them,

Indeed would make one think there might be thought,  
Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily.

*Hor.* 'Twere good she were spoken with ; for she  
may strew guile out

Dangerous conjectures in ill-breeding minds.

*Queen.* Let her come in. [Exit Horatio.

To my sick soul, as sin's true nature is,  
Each toy seems prologue to some great amiss ;  
So full of artless jealousy is guilt, disorder.  
It spills itself in fearing to be spilt. 20

*Re-enter HORATIO, with OPHELIA.*

*Oph.* Where is the beauteous majesty of Denmark ?

*Queen.* How now, Ophelia ?

*Oph.* [Sings] How should I your true love know  
From another one ?

*o f bayin* By his cockle hat and staff,  
And his sandal shoon. *shooes*

*Queen.* Alas, sweet lady, what imports this song ?

*Oph.* Say you ? nay, pray you, mark.

[Sings] He is dead and gone, lady,  
He is dead and gone ; 30  
At his head a grass-green turf,  
At his heels a stone.

*Queen.* Nay, but, Ophelia,—

*Oph.* Pray you, mark.

*Sings]* White his shroud as the mountain snow,

*Enter KING.*

*Queen.* Alas, look here, my lord.

*Oph.* [Sings] Larded with sweet flowers ;

Which bewept to the grave did go

*Shed* With true-love showers.

*King.* How do you, pretty lady ?

*Oph.* Well, God 'ild you ! They say the owl was  
a baker's daughter. Lord, we know what we are, but  
know not what we may be. God be at your table !

*King.* Conceit upon her father.

*Oph.* Pray you, let's have no words of this : but  
when they ask you what it means, say you this :

[Sings] To-morrow is Saint Valentine's day,  
All in the morning betime,  
And I a maid at your window,  
To be your Valentine.

*King.* How long has she been thus ?

*Oph.* I hope all will be well. We must be patient :  
but I cannot choose but weep, to think they should  
lay him i' the cold ground. My brother shall know  
of it : and so I thank you for your good counsel.  
Come, my coach ! Good night, ladies ; good night,  
sweet ladies ; good night, good night.

*King.* Follow her close ; give her good watch, I  
pray you.

[Exit Horatio.]

O, this is the poison of deep grief ; it springs  
All from her father's death. O Gertrude, Gertrude, 60  
When sorrows come, they come not single spies,  
But in battalions. First, her father slain :  
Next, your son gone ; and he most violent author

Of his own just remove : the people muddied,  
 Thick and unwholesome in their thoughts and whis-  
 pers,  
 For good Polonius' death ; and we have done but  
     greenly, ~~foolishly~~  
 In hugger-mugger to inter him : poor Ophelia  
 Divided from herself and her fair judgement,  
 Without the which we are pictures, or mere beasts :  
 Last, and as much containing as all these,      70  
Her brother is in secret come from France ;  
 Feeds on his wonder, keeps himself in clouds,  
 And wants not ~~buzzers~~ <sup>Calumniators</sup> to infect his ear  
 With pestilent speeches of his father's death ;  
 Wherein necessity, of matter beggar'd,  
 Will nothing stick our person to arraign  
 In ear and ear. O my dear Gertrude, ~~this~~,  
 Like to a murdering-piece, in many places  
 Gives me superfluous death.      [A noise within.

Queen.                          Alack, what noise is this ?  
 King. Where are my Switzers ? Let them guard the  
     door.      <sup>Swiss, guard</sup>      80  
 Enter another Gentleman.

What is the matter ?

Gent. <sup>Sweeping away</sup> Save yourself, my lord :  
 The ocean, overpeering of his list,  
 Eats not the flats with more impetuous haste  
 Than young Laertes, in a riotous head,  
 O'erbears your officers. The rabble call him lord ;  
 And, as the world were now but to begin,  
 Antiquity forgot, custom not known,  
 The ratifiers and props of every word,  
 They cry " Choose we : Laertes shall be king :"  
 Caps, hands, and tongues, applaud it to the clouds :

"Laertes shall be king, Laertes king!" 91  
*Queen.* How cheerfully on the false trail they cry !  
 O, this is counter, you false Danish dogs ! *She may*  
*King.* The doors are broke. [Noise within.]

Enter LAERTES, armed ; Danes following.

*Laer.* Where is this king ? Sirs, stand you all without.

*Danes.* No, let's come in.

*Laer.* I pray you, give me leave.

*Danes.* We will, we will.

[They retire without the door.]  
*Laer.* I thank you : keep the door. O thou vile king,

Give me my father !

*Queen.* Calmly, good Laertes.

*Laer.* That drop of blood that's calm proclaims me bastard. *orphan* 100

*King.* What is the cause, Laertes,  
 That thy rebellion looks so giant-like ?  
 Let him go, Gertrude ; do not fear our person :  
 There's such divinity doth hedge a king, *g'm*  
 That treason can but peep to what it would, *to*  
 Acts little of his will. Tell me, Laertes,  
 Why thou art thus incensed. Let him go, Gertrude.  
 Speak, man.

*Laer.* Where is my father ?

*King.* Dead.

*Queen.* But not by him.

*King.* Let him demand his fill.

*Laer.* How came he dead ? I'll not be juggled with : 110

To hell, allegiance ! vows, to the blackest devil !

Conscience and grace, to the profoundest pit !  
 I dare damnation. To this point I stand,  
 That both the worlds I give to negligence,  
 Let come what comes ; only I'll be revenged  
 Most thoroughly for my father.

*King.* Who shall stay you ?

*Laer.* My will, not all the world :  
 And for my means, I'll husband them so well,  
 They shall go far with little.

*King.* Good Laertes, 12c  
 If you desire to know the certainty  
 Of your dear father's death, is't writ in your revenge,  
 That, swoopstake, you will draw both friend and foe,  
 Winner and loser ?

*Laer.* None but his enemies.

*King.* Will you know them then ?

*Laer.* To his good friends thus wide I'll ope my  
 arms ;  
 And like the kind life-rendering pelican, <sup>wings spread</sup> Repast them with my blood. <sup>its own young ones</sup>

*King.* Why, now you speak. 130  
 Like a good child and a true gentleman.  
 That I am guiltless of your father's death,  
 And am most sensibly in grief for it,  
 It shall as level to your judgement pierce  
 As day does to your eye.

*Danes.* [Within] Let her come in.

*Laer.* How now ! what noise is that ?

*Re-enter OPHELIA.*

O heat, dry up my brains ! tears seven times salt,  
 Burn out the sense and virtue of mine eye !  
 By heaven, thy madness shall be paid with weight,

Till our scale turn the beam. O rose of May !  
 Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia !  
 O heavens ! is't possible, a young maid's wits  
 Should be as mortal as an old man's life ?      140  
 Nature is fine in love, and where 'tis fine,  
 It sends some precious instance of itself  
 After the thing it loves.

*Oph.* [Sings]

They bore him barefaced on the bier :  
 Hey non nonny, nonny, hey nonny ;  
 And in his grave rain'd many a tear :—

Fare you well, my dove !

*Laer.* Hadst thou thy wits, and didst persuade re-  
 venge,

It could not move thus.

*Oph.* [Sings] You must sing a-down a-down,      150  
 An you call him a-down-a.

O, how the wheel becomes it ! It is the false steward  
 that stole his master's daughter.

*Laer.* This nothing's more than matter.

*Oph.* There's rosemary, that's for remembrance ;  
 pray, love, remember : and there is pansies, that's for  
 thoughts. *Sign for thoughts*

*Laer.* A document in madness, thoughts and remem-  
 brance fitted. *symbol of flattery*      *Symbol of love*

*Oph.* There's fennel for you, and columbines :  
 there's rue for you ; and here's some for me : we may  
 call it herb-grace o' Sundays : O, you must wear your  
rue with a difference. There's a daisy : I would give  
 you some violets, but they withered all when my  
 father died : they say he made a good end,—

[Sings] For bonnie sweet Robin is all my joy.

*Laer.* Thought and affliction, passion, hell itself,  
 She turns to favour and to prettiness.

*Oph.* [Sings] And will he not come again ?  
 And will he not come again ?      170  
 No, no, he is dead :  
 Go to thy death-bed :  
 He never will come again.

*white as*  
*flax* His beard was as white as snow,  
 All flaxen was his poll : *head*  
 He is gone, he is gone,  
 And we cast away moan :  
 God ha' mercy on his soul !  
 And of all Christian souls, I pray God. God be wi' ye.

[Exit.]

*Laer.* Do you see this, O God ?      180

*King.* Laertes, I must commune with your grief,  
 Or you deny me right. Go but apart,  
 Make choice of whom your wisest friends you will,  
 And they shall hear and judge 'twixt you and me :  
 If by direct or by collateral hand *under*  
 They find us touch'd, we will our kingdom give,  
 Our crown, our life, and all that we call ours,  
 To you in satisfaction ; but if not,  
 Be you content to lend your patience to us,  
 And we shall jointly labour with your soul      190  
 To give it due content.

*Laer.* Let this be so ;  
 His means of death, his obscure funeral—  
 No trophy, sword, nor hatchment o'er his bones,  
 No noble rite nor formal ostentation—  
 Cry to be heard, as 'twere from heaven to earth,  
 That I must call't in question.

*King.* So you shall ;  
 And where the offence is let the great axe fall.  
 I pray you, go with me.      [Exeunt.]

SCENE VI. *Another room in the castle.* Enter HORATIO  
and a Servant.

*Hor.* What are they that would speak with me?

*Serv.* Sailors, sir : they say they have letters for you.

*Hor.* Let them come in. [Exit Servant.

I do not know from what part of the world  
I should be greeted, if not from lord Hamlet.

*Enter Sailors.*

*First Sail.* God bless you, sir.

*Hor.* Let him bless thee too.

*First Sail.* He shall, sir, an't please him. There's a letter for you, sir : it comes from the ambassador that was bound for England ; if your name be Horatio, as I am let to know it is. II

*Hor.* [Reads] " Horatio, when thou shalt have overlooked this, give these fellows some means to the king : they have letters for him. Ere we were two days old at sea, a pirate of very warlike appointment gave us chase. Finding ourselves too slow of sail, we put on a compelled valour, and in the grapple I boarded them : on the instant they got clear of our ship ; so I alone became their prisoner. They have dealt with me like thieves of mercy : but they knew what they did ; I am to do a good turn for them. Let the king have the letters I have sent ; and repair thou to me with as much speed as thou wouldest fly death. I have words to speak in thine ear will make thee dumb ; yet are they much too light for the bore of the matter. These good fellows will bring thee where I am. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern hold their course for England : of them I have much to tell thee. Farewell.

" He that thou knowest thine, HAMLET."

Come, I will make you way for these your letters ; 30  
 And do't the speedier, that you may direct me  
 To him from whom you brought them. [Exeunt.

SCENE VII. *Another room in the castle.* Enter KING  
 and LAERTES.

*King.* Now must your conscience my acquittance,  
 seal, explanation!  
 And you must put me in your heart for friend,  
Sith you have heard, and with a knowing ear,  
 That he which hath your noble father slain  
Pursued my life.

*Laer.* It well appears : but tell me  
Why you proceeded not against these feats,  
 So crimeful and so capital in nature,  
 As by your safety, wisdom, all things else,  
 You mainly were stirr'd up.

*King.* O, for two special reasons ;  
 Which may to you, perhaps, seem much unsinew'd, 10.  
 But yet to me they are strong. The queen his mother  
Lives almost by his looks ; and for myself—  
 My virtue or my plague, be it either which—  
 She's so conjunctive to my life and soul,  
 That, as the star moves not but in his sphere,  
 I could not but by her. The other motive,  
 Why to a public count I might not go,  
 Is the great love the general gender bear him ; <sup>he of</sup> Co  
Who, dipping all his faults in their affection,  
 Would, like the spring that turneth wood to stone, 20  
 Convert his gyves to graces ; so that my arrows  
Too slightly timber'd for so loud a wind,  
Would have reverted to my bow again,  
And not where I had aim'd them.

*Laer.* And so have I a noble father lost ;  
 A sister driven into desperate terms, ~~one~~  
Whose worth, if praises may go back again,  
Stood challenger on mount of all the age  
For her perfections : but my revenge will come.

*King.* Break not your sleeps for that : you must not  
 think 30  
 That we are made of stuff so flat and dull  
 That we can let our beard be shook with danger  
 And think it pastime. You shortly shall hear more :  
 I loved your father, and we love ourselves ;  
 And that, I hope, will teach you to imagine—

*Enter a Messenger.*

How now ! what news ?

*Mess.* Letters, my lord, from Hamlet  
 This to your majesty : this to the queen.

*King.* From Hamlet ! who brought them ?  
*Mess.* Sailors, my lord, they say ; I saw them not :  
 They were given me by Claudio ; he received them 40  
 Of him that brought them.

*King.* Laertes, you shall hear them.  
 Leave us. [Exit Messenger.]

[Reads] “ High and mighty, You shall know I am  
 set naked on your kingdom. To-morrow shall I beg  
leave to see your kingly eyes : when I shall, first asking  
 your pardon thereunto, recount the occasion of my  
 sudden and more strange return.

“ HAMLET.”

What should this mean ? Are all the rest come back ?  
 Or is it some abuse, and no such thing ? 50

† *Laer.* Know you the hand ?

*King.* ‘Tis Hamlet’s character. “ Naked ! ”  
 And in a postscript here, he says “ alone.”

Can you advise me ?

*Laer.* I'm lost in it, my lord. But let him come ;  
It warms the very sickness in my heart,  
That I shall live and tell him to his teeth,  
" Thus didest thou."

*King.* If it be so, Laertes  
As how should it be so ? how otherwise ?  
Will you be ruled by me ?

*Laer.* Ay, my lord ;  
So you will not o'errule me to a peace. 60

*King.* To thine own peace. If he be now return'd,  
As checking at his voyage, and that he means  
No more to undertake it, I will work him  
To an exploit, now ripe in my device,  
Under the which he shall not choose but fall :  
And for his death no wind of blame shall breathe,  
But even his mother shall uncharge the practice  
And call it accident.

*Laer.* My lord, I will be ruled ;  
The rather, if you could devise it so  
That I might be the organ. *wish me not*

*King.* It falls right. 70  
You have been talk'd of since your travel much,  
And that in Hamlet's hearing, for a quality  
Wherein, they say, you shine : your sum of parts  
Did not together pluck such envy from him  
As did that one, and that, in my regard,  
Of the unworthiest siege, *part*

*Laer.* *trifle* What part is that, my lord ?

*King.* A very riband in the cap of youth, 80  
Yet needful too ; for youth no less becomes  
The light and careless livery that it wears  
Than settled age his sables and his weeds,  
Importing health and graveness. Two months since,

Here was a gentleman of Normandy :—  
 I've seen myself, and served against, the French,  
 And they can well on horseback : but this gallant  
 Had witchcraft in't ; he grew unto his seat ;  
 And to such wondrous doing brought his horse,  
 As had he been incorpsed and demi-natured  
 With the brave beast : so far he topp'd my thought,  
 That I, in forgery of shapes and tricks,  
 Came short of what he did.

*Laer.* A Norman was't ?      90

*King.* A Norman.

*Laer.* Upon my life, Lamond. name of a Norman

*King.* The very same.

*Laer.* I know him well : he is the brooch indeed  
 And gem of all the nation.

*King.* He made confession of you,  
 And gave you such a masterly report  
 For art and exercise in your defence,  
 And for your rapier most especially,  
 That he cried out, 'twould be a sight indeed,  
If one could match you : the scrimers of their nation,  
 He swore, had neither motion, guard, nor eye,      101  
 If you opposed them. Sir, this report of his  
Did Hamlet so envenom with his envy  
That he could nothing do but wish and beg  
Your sudden coming o'er, to play with him.  
Now, out of this,—

*Laer.* What out of this, my lord ?

*King.* Laertes, was your father dear to you ?  
 Or are you like the painting of a sorrow,  
 A face without a heart ?

*Laer.* Why ask you this ?

*King.* Not that I think you did not love your father ;  
 But that I know love is begun by time ;      111

And that I see, in passages of proof,  
Time qualifies the spark and fire of it.  
There lives within the very flame of love  
A kind of wick or snuff that will abate it ;  
And nothing is at a like goodness still ;  
For goodness, growing to a plurisy, ~~Surf~~  
Dies in his own too much : that we would do,  
We should do when we would ; for this "would"  
changes.

And hath abatements and delays as many      120  
As there are tongues, are hands, are accidents ; ~~but~~  
And then this "should" is like a spendthrift sigh,  
That hurts by easing. But, to the quick o' the ulcer :—  
Hamlet comes back : what would you undertake,  
To show yourself your father's son in deed  
More than in words ?      *Sanctuarize*

Laer.      To cut his throat i' the church.  
King. No place, indeed, should murder sanctuarize;  
Revenge should have no bounds. But, good Laertes,  
Will you do this, keep close within your chamber ?  
Hamlet return'd shall know you are come home : 130  
We'll put on those shall praise your excellence  
And set a double varnish on the fame

The Frenchman gave you, bring you in fine together  
And wager on your heads : ~~he~~, being remiss, *Careless*,  
Most generous and free from all contriving,  
Will not peruse the foils ; so that, with ease,  
Or with a little shuffling, you may choose  
A sword unbated, and in a pass of practice  
Requite him for your father.

Laer.      I will do't :  
And, for that purpose, I'll anoint my sword.  
I bought an unction of a mountebank,      140  
So mortal that, but dip a knife in it, *quack doctor*

Where it draws blood no cataplasm so rare,  
 Collected from all simples that have virtue  
Under the moon, can save the thing from death  
 That is but scratch'd withal : I'll touch my point  
 With this contagion, that, if I gall him slightly,  
 It may be death.<sup>to</sup> <sup>bite</sup>

*King.* Let's further think of this ;  
 Weigh what convenience both of time and means  
 May fit us to our shape : if this should fail,      150  
 And that our drift look through our bad performance,  
 'Twere better not assay'd : therefore this project  
 Should have a back or second, that might hold,  
 If this should blast in proof. Soft ! let me see :  
 We'll make a solemn wager on your cunnings :  
 I ha't :  
 When in your motion you are hot and dry—  
 As make your bouts more violent to that end—  
 And that he calls for drink, I'll have prepared him  
 A chalice for the nonce, whereon but sipping,      160  
 If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck,  
 Our purpose may hold there. <sup>poisoned</sup>

*Enter QUEEN.* <sup>up for the occasion</sup> How now, sweet queen !

*Queen.* One woe doth tread upon another's heel,  
 So fast they follow : your sister's drown'd, Laertes.

*Laer.* Drown'd ! O, where ? <sup>tree</sup>

*Queen.* There is a willow grows aslant a brook,  
 That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream ;  
 There with fantastic garlands did she come <sup>me</sup>  
 Of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples.  
 There, on the pendent boughs her coronet weeds      170  
 Clambering to hang, an envious sliver broke ;  
 When down her weedy trophies and herself

Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide ;  
And, mermaid-like, awhile they bore her up :  
Which time she chanted snatches of old tunes ;  
As one incapable of her own distress,  
Or like a creature native and indued  
Unto that element : but long it could not be  
Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,  
Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay.      180  
To muddy death.

*Laer.*      Alas, then, she is drown'd ?

*Queen.* Drown'd, drown'd.

*Laer.* Too much of water hast thou, poor Ophelia,  
And therefore I forbid my tears : but yet  
It is our trick ; nature her custom holds,  
Let shame say what it will : when these are gone,  
The woman will be out. Adieu, my lord :  
I have a speech of fire, that fain would blaze,  
But that this folly douts it.      [Exit.]

*King.*      Let's follow, Gertrude :  
How much I had to do to calm his rage !      190  
Now fear I this will give it start again ;  
Therefore let's follow.      [Exeunt.]

## ACT V

SCENE I. *A churchyard. Enter two Clowns, with spades, &c.*

*First Clo.* Is she to be buried in Christian burial that wilfully seeks her own salvation ?

*Sec. Clo.* I tell thee she is : and therefore make her grave ~~straight~~ <sup>at one</sup> : the crowner hath sat on her, and finds it Christian burial. <sup>over</sup>

*First Clo.* How can that be, unless she drowned herself in her own defence ?

*Sec. Clo.* Why, 'tis found so. <sup>blunder</sup>

*First Clo.* It must be "se offendendo ;" it cannot be else. For here lies the point : if I drown myself wittingly, it argues an act : and an act hath three branches ; it is, to act, to do, and to perform : argal <sup>her</sup> she drowned herself wittingly. <sup>13</sup>

*Sec. Clo.* Nay, but hear you, goodman delver, — <sup>dug</sup> <sup>you</sup>

*First Clo.* Give me leave. Here lies the water ; good : here stands the man ; good : if the man go to this water, and drown himself, it is, will he, nill he, he goes, — mark you that ; but if the water come to him and drown him, he drowns not himself : argal, he that is not guilty of his own death shortens not his own life.

*Sec. Clo.* But is this law ?

<sup>wiggest</sup> 21

*First Clo.* Ay, marry, is't ; crowner's quest law.

*Sec. Clo.* Will you ha' the truth on't ? If this had not been a gentlewoman, she should have been buried out o' Christian burial.

*First Clo.* Why, there thou say'st : and the more pity that great folk should have countenance in this world to drown or hang themselves, more than their even Christian. Come, my spade. There is no ancient gentlemen but gardeners, ditchers, and grave-makers : they hold up Adam's profession.

*Sec. Clo.* Was he a gentleman ? Was he a gentleman?

*First Clo.* A' was the first that ever bore arms.

*Sec. Clo.* Why, he had none.

*First Clo.* What, art a heathen ? How dost thou understand the Scripture ? The Scripture says " Adam digged : " could he dig without arms ? I'll put another question to thee : if thou answerest me not to the purpose, confess thyself—

*Sec. Clo.* Go to. 40

*First Clo.* What is he that builds stronger than either the mason, the shipwright, or the carpenter ?

*Sec. Clo.* The gallows-maker ; for that frame out-lives a thousand tenants.

*First Clo.* I like thy wit well, in good faith : the gallows does well ; but how does it well ? it does well to those that do ill ; now thou dost ill to say the gallows is built stronger than the church : argal, the gallows may do well to thee. To't again, come.

*Sec. Clo.* " Who builds stronger than a mason, a shipwright, or a carpenter ? "

*First Clo.* Ay, tell me that, and unyoke. unyoke

*Sec. Clo.* Marry, now I can tell.

*First Clo.* To't.

*Sec. Clo.* Mass, I cannot tell.

*Enter HAMLET and HORATIO, at a distance.*

*First Clo.* Cudgel thy brains no more about it, for your dull ass / will not mend his pace with beating ;

and, when you are asked this question next, say “a grave-maker :” the houses that he makes last till doomsday. Go, get thee to Yaughan : fetch me a stoup of liquor.

*[Exit Sec. Clown.]*

*[Flourish.]* [He digs, and sings.]

In youth, when I did love, did love, 62

Methought it was very sweet,

To contract, O, the time, for, ah, my behove,

O, methought, there was nothing meet.

*Ham.* Has this fellow no feeling of his business, that he sings at grave-making ?

*Hor.* Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness. *[He diggs, and sings.]*

*Ham.* 'Tis e'en so : the hand of little employment hath the daintier sense. 71

*First Clo.* [Sings] *[Flute.]*

But age, with his stealing steps,

Hath claw'd me in his clutch, *[Flute.]*

And hath shipped me intil the land,

As if I had never been such.

*[Throws up a skull.]*

*Ham.* That skull had a tongue in it, and could sing once : how the knave jowl'd it to the ground, as if it were Cain's jawbone, that did the first murder ! It might be the pate of a politician, which this ass now o'er-reaches ; one that would circumvent God, might it not ? *[Cain & Abel.]* *Schemer.* 81

*Hor.* It might, my lord.

*Ham.* Or of a courtier ; which could say “ Good morrow, sweet lord ! How dost thou, good lord ? ” This might be my lord Such-a-one, that praised my lord Such-a-one's horse, when he meant to beg it ; might it not ?

*Hor.* Ay, my lord.

*Ham.* Why, e'en so : and now my lady Worm's ; chapless, and knocked about the mazzard with a sexton's spade: here's fine revolution, an we had the trick to see't. Did these bones cost no more the breeding, but to play at loggats with 'em ? mine ache to think on't.

*First Clo. [Sings]* <sup>again</sup> ~~bowling~~

A pick-axe, and a spade, a spade,  
For and a shrouding sheet :  
O, a pit of clay for to be made  
For such a guest is meet.

98

[*Throws up another skull.*]

*Ham.* There's another : why may not that be the skull of a lawyer ? Where be his ~~judicium~~ quiddities now, his quilletts, his cases, his tenures, and his tricks ? why does he suffer this rude knave now to knock him about the sconce with a dirty shovel, and will not tell him of his action of battery ? Hum ! This fellow might be in's time a great buyer of land, with his statutes, his recognizances, his fines, his double vouchers, his recoveries : is this the fine of his fines, and the recovery of his recoveries, to have his fine ~~face~~ pate full of fine dirt ? will his vouchers vouch him no more of his purchases, and double ones too, than the length and breadth of a pair of indentures ? The very conveyances of his lands will hardly lie in this box ; and must the inheritor himself have no more, ha ?

*Hor.* Not a jot more, my lord.

*Ham.* Is not parchment made of sheep-skins ?

*Hor.* Ay, my lord, and of calf-skins too.

*Ham.* They are sheep and calves which seek out assurance in that. I will speak to this fellow. Whose grave's this, sirrah ?

*First Clo.* Mine, sir.

120

[Sings] O, a pit of clay for to be made  
For such a guest is meet.

*Ham.* I think it be thine, indeed ; for thou liest in't.

*First Clo.* You lie out on't, sir, and therefore it is not yours : for my part, I do not lie in't, and yet it is mine.

*Ham.* Thou dost lie in't, to be in't and say it is thine : 'tis for the dead, not for the quick ; therefore thou liest.

*First Clo.* 'Tis a quick lie, sir ; 'twill away again, from me to you. 131

*Ham.* What man dost thou dig it for ?

*First Clo.* For no man, sir.

*Ham.* What woman, then ?

*First Clo.* For none, neither.

*Ham.* Who's to be buried in't ?

*First Clo.* One that was a woman, sir ; but, rest her soul, she's dead. wonderful logic

*Ham.* How absolute the knavery is ! we must speak by the card, or equivocation will undo us. By the Lord, Horatio, these three years I have taken note of it ; the age is grown so picked that the toe of the peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier, he galls his kibes. How long hast thou been a grave-maker ?

*First Clo.* Of all the days i' the year, I come to't that day that our last king Hamlet overcame Fortinbras.

*Ham.* How long is that since ?

*First Clo.* Cannot you tell that ? every fool can tell that : it was the very day that young Hamlet was born ; he that is mad, and sent into England. 150

*Ham.* Ay, marry, why was he sent into England ?

*First Clo.* Why, because he was mad : he shall recover his wits there ; or, if he do not, it's no great matter there.

*Queen.* O my son, what theme ?

*Ham.* I loved Ophelia : forty thousand brothers  
Could not, with all their quantity of love,  
Make up my sum. What wilt thou do for her ?

*King.* O, he is mad, Laertes.

*Queen.* For love of God, forbear him.

*Ham.* 'Swounds, show me what thou'l do :  
Woo't weep ? woo't fight ? woo't fast ? woo't tear  
thyself ?

Woo't drink up eisel ? eat a crocodile ?

I'll do't. Dost thou come here to whine ? 280

To outface me with leaping in her grave ?

Be buried quick with her, and so will I :

And, if thou prate of mountains, let them throw  
Millions of acres on us, till our ground,

Singeing his pate against the burning zone, 290  
Make Ossa like a wart ! Nay, an thou'l mouth,  
I'll rant as well as thou.

*Queen.* This is mere madness :  
And thus awhile the fit will work on him ;  
Anon, as patient as the female dove,  
When that her golden couplets are disclosed,  
His silence will sit drooping, <sup>and</sup> ~~grief~~ <sup>are</sup> ~~hateful~~

*Ham.* Hear you, sir ;  
What is the reason that you use me thus ?  
I loved you ever : but it is no matter ;  
Let Hercules himself do what he may,  
The cat will mew and dog will have his day. [Exit.]

*King.* I pray you, good Horatio, wait upon him.

[Exit Horatio.]

[To Laertes] Strengthen your patience in our last  
night's speech ;

We'll put the matter to the present push.

Good Gertrude, set some watch over your son.

This grave shall have a living monument :                   300  
 An hour of quiet shortly shall we see ;  
 Till then, in patience our proceeding be.                 [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *A hall in the castle. Enter HAMLET*

*enact incidents how Hamlet esc and HORATIO.*  
*Ham.* So much for this, sir : now shall you see the other :

You do remember all the circumstance ?                   *wreck*

*C Hor.* Remember it, my lord !

*Ham.* Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting,  
 That would not let me sleep : methought I lay  
Worse than the mutines in the bilboes. Rashly,—  
And praised be rashness for it,—let us know,  
Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well,  
When our deep plots do fail : and that should teach us  
There's a divinity that shapes our ends,                   10  
 Rough-hew them how we will,—

*Hor.*   That is most certain.

*Ham.* Up from my cabin,  
 My sea-gown scarf'd about me, in the dark  
 Groped I to find out them ; had my desire,  
 Finger'd their packet, and in fine withdrew  
 To mine own room again ; making so bold,  
 My fears forgetting manners, to unseal  
Their grand commission ; where I found, Horatio,—  
O royal knavery !—an exact command,  
Larded with many several sorts of reasons                   20  
Importing Denmark's health and England's too,  
 With, ho ! such ~~bugs~~ <sup>troupe</sup> and goblins in my life,  
That, on the supervise, no leisure bated, ~~will~~  
No, not to stay the grinding of the axe,  
 My head should be struck off.

*Hor.* *order* Is't possible ?

*Ham.* Here's the commission : read it at more leisure.

But wilt thou hear me how I did proceed ?

*Hor.* I beseech you. *easen*

*Ham.* Being thus be-netted round with villanies,—  
Ere I could make a prologue to my brains, 30  
They had begun the play—I sat me down,  
Devised a new commission, wrote it fair ;  
I once did hold it, as our statists do, *Statesmen*  
A baseness to write fair and labour'd much  
How to forget that learning, but, sir, now  
It did me yeoman's service : wilt thou know  
The effect of what I wrote ?

*Hor.* Ay, good my lord.

*Ham.* An earnest conjuration from the king,  
As England was his faithful tributary,  
As love between them like the palm might flourish, 40  
As peace should still her wheaten garland wear  
And stand a comma 'tween their families, *Wheat* & *barley*  
And many such-like "As"es of great charge, *& few*  
That, on the view and knowing of these contents,  
Without debatement further, more or less,  
He should the bearers put to sudden death,  
Not shriving-time allow'd.

*Hor.* How was this seal'd ?

*Ham.* Why, even in that was heaven ordain'd.

I had my father's signet in my purse,  
Which was the model of that Danish seal ; 50  
Folded the writ up in form of the other,  
Subscribed it, gave't the impression, placed it safely,  
The changeling never known. Now, the next day  
Was our sea-fight ; and what to this was sequent  
Thou know'st already.

*Hor.* So Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to't.

*Ham.* Why, man, they did make love to this em-  
ployment ;

They are not near my conscience ; their defeat  
Does by their own insinuation grow : *Cowards,*  
'Tis dangerous when the baser nature comes 60  
Between the pass and fell incensed points  
Of mighty opposites. *Opposites*

*Hor.* Why, what a king is this !

*Ham.* Does it not, thinks't thee, stand me now  
upon —

He that hath kill'd my king and whored my mother,  
<sup>Woman given over to</sup>  
Popp'd in between the election and my hopes,  
Thrown out his angle for my proper life,  
And with such cozenage — is't not perfect conscience,  
To quit him with this arm ? and is't not to be damn'd,  
To let this canker of our nature come  
In further evil ?

*Hor.* It must be shortly known to him from England  
What is the issue of the business there.

*Ham.* It will be short : the interim is mine ;  
And a man's life's no more than to say "One."  
But I am very sorry, good Horatio,  
That to Laertes I forgot myself ; *Comm.*  
For, by the image of my cause, I see <sup>of</sup> 1  
The portraiture of his : I'll court his favours :  
But, sure, the bravery of his grief did put me  
Into a towering passion.

*Hor.* Peace ! who comes here ? 80

*Enter OSRIC.* *foppish* (fashioned)

*Osr.* Your lordship is right welcome back to Den-  
mark.

*Ham.* I humbly thank you, sir. Dost know this water-fly?

*Hor.* No my good lord.

*Ham.* Thy state is the more gracious ; for 'tis a vice to know him. He hath much land, and fertile : let a beast be lord of beasts, and his crib shall stand at the king's mess <sup>dirt or meat</sup> ; 'tis a chough ; but, as I say, spacious in the possession of dirt. <sup>Jaſper</sup> manager 90

*Osr.* Sweet lord, if your lordship were at leisure, I should impart a thing to you from his majesty.

*Ham.* I will receive it, sir, with all diligence of spirit. Put your bonnet to his right use ; 'tis for the head.

*Osr.* I thank your lordship, it is very hot.

*Ham.* No, believe me, 'tis very cold ; the wind is northerly.

*Osr.* It is indifferent cold, my lord, indeed.

*Ham.* But yet methinks it is very sultry and hot for my complexion. 100

*Osr.* Exceedingly, my lord ; it is very sultry,—as 'twere,—I cannot tell how. But, my lord, his majesty bade me signify to you that he has laid a great wager on your head : sir, this is the matter,—

*Ham.* I beseech you, remember—

[*Hamlet moves him to put on his hat.*

*Osr.* Nay, good my lord ; for mine ease, in good faith. Sir, here is newly come to court Laertes ; believe me, an absolute gentleman, full of most excellent differences, of very soft society and great showing : indeed, to speak feelingly of him, he is the card or calendar of gentry, for you shall find in him the continent of what a gentleman would see. <sup>fear</sup> 112

*Ham.* Sir, his definement suffers no perdition in you ; though, I know, to divide him inventorially would dizzy the arithmetic of memory, and yet but

yaw neither, in respect of his quick sail. But, in the verity of extolment, I take him to be a soul of great article ; and his infusion of such dearth and rareness, as, to make true diction of him, his semblable is his mirror ; and who else would trace him, his umbrage, nothing more.

Sartoriam

121

*Osr.* Your lordship speaks most infallibly of him.

*Ham.* The concernancy, sir ? why do we wrap the gentleman in our more rawer breath ?

*Osr.* Sir ?

my fitter

*Hor.* Is't not possible to understand in another tongue ? You will do't, sir, really.

*Ham.* What imports the nomination of this gentleman ?

*Osr.* Of Laertes ?

130

*Hor.* His purse is empty already ; all's golden words are spent.

*Ham.* Of him, sir.

*Osr.* I know you are not ignorant—

*Ham.* I would you did, sir ; yet, in faith, if you did, it would not much approve me. Well, sir ?

*Osr.* You are not ignorant of what excellence Laertes is—

*Ham.* I dare not confess that, lest I should compare with him in excellence ; but, to know a man well, were to know himself.

141

*Osr.* I mean, sir, for his weapon ; but in the imputation laid on him by them, in his meed he's unfellowed.

*Ham.* What's his weapon ?

courage

*Osr.* Rapier and dagger.

*Ham.* That's two of his weapons : but, well.

*Osr.* The king, sir, hath wagered with him six Barbary horses : against the which he has imponed, as I take it, six French rapiers and poniards, with their

assigns, as girdle, hangers, and so : three of the carriages, in faith, are very dear to fancy, very responsive to the hilts, most delicate carriages, and of very liberal conceit.

153

*Ham.* What call you the carriages ?

*Hor.* I knew you must be edified by the margent ere you had done.

*Osr.* The carriages, sir, are the hangers.

*Ham.* The phrase would be more german<sup>relinquish</sup> to the matter, if we could carry cannon by our sides : I would it might be hangers till then. But, on : six Barbary horses against six French swords, their assigns, and three liberal-conceited carriages ; that's the French bet against the Danish. Why is this "imponed," as you call it ?

164

*Osr.* The king, sir, hath laid, that in a dozen passes between yourself and him, he shall not exceed you three hits : he hath laid on twelve for nine ; and it would come to immediate trial, if your lordship would vouchsafe the answer.

*Ham.* How if I answer "no" ?

170

*Osr.* I mean, my lord, the opposition of your person in trial.

*Ham.* Sir, I will walk here in the hall : if it please his majesty, 'tis the breathing time of day with me ; let the foils be brought, the gentleman willing, and the king hold his purpose, I will win for him an I can ; if not, I will gain nothing but my shame and the odd hits.

*Osr.* Shall I re-deliver you e'en so ?

*Ham.* To this effect, sir ; after what flourish your nature will.

181

*Osrr.* I commend my duty to your lordship.

*Ham.* Yours, yours. [Exit Osric.] He does well to

commend it himself ; there are no tongues else for's turn.

*Hor.* This lapwing runs away with the shell on his head.

*Ham.* He did comply with his dug, before he sucked it. Thus has he—and many more of the same bevy that I know the ~~drossy~~ age dotes on—only got the tune of the time and outward habit of encounter ; a kind of yesty collection, which carries them through and through the most fanned and winnowed opinions ; and do but blow them to their trial, the bubbles are out.

195

*Enter a Lord.*

*Lord.* My lord, his majesty commended him to you by young Osric, who brings back to him, that you attend him in the hall : he sends to know if your pleasure hold to play with Laertes, or that you will take longer time.

200

*Ham.* I am constant to my purposes ; they follow the king's pleasure : if his fitness speaks, mine is ready; now or whensoever, provided I be so able as now.

*Lord.* The king and queen and all are coming down.

*Ham.* In happy time.

*Lord.* The queen desires you to use some gentle entertainment to Laertes before you fall to play.

*Ham.* She well instructs me. [Exit *Lord.*

*Hor.* You will lose this wager, my lord. 209

*Ham.* I do not think so ; since he went into France, I have been in continual practice ; I shall win at the odds. But thou wouldest not think how ill all's here about my heart : but it is no matter.

*Hor.* Nay, good my lord,—

*Ham.* It is but foolery ; but it is such a kind of gain-giving, as would perhaps trouble a woman.

*Hor.* If your mind dislike any thing, obey it : I will forestal their repair hither, and say you are not fit.

*Ham.* Not a whit, we defy augury : there's a special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come ; if it be not to come, it will be now ; if it be not now, yet it will come : the readiness is all : since no man has aught of what he leaves, what is't to leave betimes ?

224

*Enter KING, QUEEN, LAERTES, Lords, OSRIC, and Attendants with foils, &c.*

*King.* Come, Hamlet, come, and take this hand from me.

[*The King puts Laertes' hand into Hamlet's.*

*Ham.* Give me your pardon, sir : I've done you wrong ;

But pardon't, as you are a gentleman.

This presence knows,

And you must needs have heard, how I am punish'd With sore distraction. What I have done, 230

That might your nature, honour and exception *all - ful* Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness.

Was't Hamlet wrong'd Laertes ? Never Hamlet :

If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away,

And when he's not himself does wrong Laertes,

Then Hamlet does it not, Hamlet denies it.

Who does it, then ? His madness : if't be so,

Hamlet is of the faction that is wrong'd ;

His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy.

Sir, in this audience,

Let my disclaiming from a purposed evil

Free me so far in your most generous thoughts,

240

That I have shot mine arrow o'er the house,  
And hurt my brother.

*Laer.* I am satisfied in nature, ••  
Whose motive, in this case, should stir me most  
To my revenge : but in my terms of honour  
I stand aloof ; and will no reconciliation,  
Till by some elder masters, of known honour,  
I have a voice and precedent of peace,  
To keep my name ungored. But till that time, 250  
I do receive your offer'd love like love,  
And will not wrong it.

*Ham.* I embrace it freely ;  
And will this brother's wager frankly play.  
Give us the foils. Come on.

*Laer.* Come, one for me.  
*Ham.* I'll be your foil, Laertes : in mine ignorance  
Your skill shall, like a star i' the darkest night,  
Stick fiery off indeed. *Shine out*

*Laer.* You mock me, sir.

*Ham.* No, by this hand.

*King.* Give them the foils, young Osric. Cousin  
Hamlet,  
You know the wager ?

*Ham.* Very well, my lord ; 260  
Your grace hath laid the odds o' the weaker side.

*King.* I do not fear it ; I have seen you both :  
But since he is better'd, we have therefore odds.

*Laer.* This is too heavy, let me see another.

*Ham.* This likes me well. These foils have all a  
length ?

[They prepare to play.]

*Osrr.* Ay, my good lord. *Arms*,

*King.* Set me the stoups of wine upon that table.  
If Hamlet give the first or second hit,

Or quit in answer of the third exchange,  
 Let all the battlements their ordnance fire ;      270  
 The king shall drink to Hamlet's better breath ;  
 And in the cup an ~~pearl~~<sup>pean</sup> shall he throw,  
 Richer than that which four successive kings  
 In Denmark's crown have worn. Give me the cups ;  
 And let the kettle to the trumpet speak,  
 The trumpet to the cannoneer without,  
 The cannons to the heavens, the heavens to earth,  
 "Now the king drinks to Hamlet." Come, begin :  
 And you, the judges, bear a wary eye.

*Ham.* Come on, sir.      *Cantoris*

*Laer.*      Come, my lord. [They play.]

*Ham.*      One.

*Laer.*      No.

*Ham.*      Judgement.

*Osr.* A hit, a very palpable hit.

*Laer.*      Well ; again. 281

*King.* Stay ; give me drink. *Hamlet*, this pearl is  
thine ;

Here's to thy health.

[Trumpets sound, and cannon shot off within.]

Give him the cup.

*Ham.* I'll play this bout first ; set it by awhile.

Come. [They play.] Another hit ; what say you ?

*Laer.* A touch, a touch, I do confess.

*King.* Our son shall win. *do not breathe A m*

*Queen.* He's fat, and scant of breath.

Here, Hamlet, take my napkin, rub thy brows :

The queen carouses to thy fortune, Hamlet.

*Ham.* Good madam !

*King.* Gertrude, do not drink. 290

*Queen.* I will, my lord ; I pray you, pardon me.

*King.* [Aside] It is the poison'd cup : it is too late.

*Ham.* I dare not drink yet, madam ; by and by.

*Queen.* Come, let me wipe thy face.

*Laer.* My lord, I'll hit him now.

*King.* I do not think't.

*Laer.* [Aside] And yet 'tis almost 'gainst my conscience.

*Ham.* Come, for the third, Laertes : you but dally ; I pray you, pass with your best violence ;

I am afraid you make a wanton of me ~~break~~ <sup>me too</sup>

*Laer.* Say you so ? come on. [They play.]

*Osr.* Nothing, neither way. 301

*Laer.* Have at you now !

[*Laertes wounds Hamlet ; then, in scuffling, they change rapiers, and Hamlet wounds Laertes.*]

*King.* Part them ; they are incensed.

*Ham.* Nay, come, again. [The Queen falls.]

*Osr.* Look to the queen there, ho !

*Hor.* They bleed on both sides. How is it, my lord?

*Osr.* How is't, Laertes ? <sup>deceit</sup>

*Laer.* Why, as a woodcock to mine own springe, Osric ;

I am justly kill'd with mine own treachery.

*Ham.* How does the queen ?

*King.* She swounds to see them bleed.

*Queen.* No, no, the drink, the drink,—O my dear Hamlet,—

The drink, the drink ! I am poison'd. [Dies.]

*Ham.* O villany ! Ho ! let the door be lock'd : Treachery ! Seek it out. 312

*Laer.* It is here, Hamlet : Hamlet, thou art slain ; No medicine in the world can do thee good ; In thee there is not half an hour of life ; The treacherous instrument is in thy hand,

Unbated and envenom'd : the foul practice  
 Hath turn'd itself on me ; lo, here I lie,  
 Never to rise again : thy mother's poison'd :  
 I can no more : the king, the king's to blame.      320

*Ham.* The point envenom'd too !

Then, venom, to thy work.      [Stabs the King.

*All.* Treason ! treason !

*King.* O, yet defend me, friends ; I am but hurt.

*Ham.* Here, thou incestuous, murderous, damned  
Dane, drink pearl.

Drink off this potion. Is thy union here ?

Follow my mother.      [King dies.

*Laer.* made He is justly served ;

It is a poison temper'd by himself.

Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet :

Mine and my father's death come not upon thee,      330

Nor thine on me !      [Dies.

*Ham.* Heaven make thee free of it ! I follow thee.

I am dead, Horatio. Wretched queen, adieu !

You that look pale and tremble at this chance,

That are but mutes or audience to this act,

Had I but time—as this fell sergeant, death,

Is strict in his arrest—O, I could tell you—

But let it be. Horatio, I am dead ;

Thou livest ; report me and my cause aright

To the unsatisfied.

*Hor.*      Never believe it :

340

I am more an antique Roman than a Dane :

Here's yet some liquor left.

*Ham.*      As thou'rt a man,

Give me the cup : let go ; by heaven, I'll have't.

O good Horatio, what a wounded name,

Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind me !

If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,

Absent thee from felicity awhile,  
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,  
To tell my story. [March afar off, and shot within.]  
 What warlike noise is this ?

Osr. Young Fortinbras, with conquest come from  
 Poland, 350  
 To the ambassadors of England gives  
 This warlike volley.

Ham. O, I die, Horatio ;  
 The potent poison quite o'er-crows my spirit :  
 I cannot live to hear the news from England ;  
 But I do prophesy the election lights <sup>successor</sup>  
 On Fortinbras : he has my dying voice ;  
 So tell him, with the occurrents, more and less,  
 Which have solicited. The rest is silence. [Dies.]

Hor. Now cracks a noble heart. Good night, sweet  
 prince ;  
 And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest ! 360  
 Why does the drum come hither ? [March within.]

Enter FORTINBRAS, the English Ambassadors,  
 and others.

Fort. Where is this sight ?

Hor. What is it ye would see ?  
 If aught of woe or wonder, cease your search.

Fort. This quarry cries on havoc. O proud death,  
 What feast is toward in thine eternal cell,  
 That thou so many princes at a shot  
 So bloodily hast struck ?

First Amb. The sight is dismal ;  
 And our affairs from England come too late :  
 The ears are senseless that should give us hearing,  
 To tell him his commandment is fulfill'd, 370

That Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead :  
Where should we have our thanks ?

*Hor.* Not from his mouth,  
Had it the ability of life to thank you :  
He never gave commandment for their death.  
But since, so jump upon this bloody question,  
You from the Polack wars, and you from England,  
Are here arrived, give order that these bodies  
High on a stage be placed to the view ;  
And let me speak to the yet unknowing world  
How these things came about : so shall you hear 380  
Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts,  
Of accidental judgements, casual slayters,  
Of deaths put on by cunning and forced cause,  
And, in this upshot, purposes mistook,  
Fall'n on the inventors' heads : all this can I  
Truly deliver.

*Fort.* Let us haste to hear it,  
And call the noblest to the audience.  
For me, with sorrow I embrace my fortune :  
I have some rights of memory in this kingdom,  
Which now to claim my vantage doth invite me. 390

*Hor.* Of that I shall have also cause to speak,  
And from his mouth whose voice will draw on more :  
But let this same be presently perform'd,  
Even while men's minds are wild ; lest more mis-  
chance,  
On plots and errors, happen.

*Fort.* Let four captains  
Bear Hamlet, like a soldier, to the stage ;  
For he was likely, had he been put on,  
To have proved most royally : and, for his passage,  
The soldiers' music and the rites of war 400  
Speak loudly for him.

Take up the bodies : such a sight as this  
Becomes the field, but here shows much amiss.  
Go, bid the soldiers shoot.

[*A dead march. Exeunt, bearing off the dead bodies ; after which a peal of ordnance is shot off.*



## NOTES

### *Act I*

### *Scene 1*

The battlements at midnight. The Ghost of Hamlet's father appears to Horatio, Marcellus, and Bernardo.

- l. 13. *Rivals* : partners.
- l. 23. *Fantasy* : fancy, imagination.
- l. 29. *Approve our eyes* : admit that we are right in our account of what we have seen.
- l. 37. *Made his course* : travelled along its path.
- l. 42. *Thou art a scholar* : The usual form of exorcism was in Latin.
- l. 45. *It would be spoke to* : It wants us to speak to it.
- l. 46. *Usurp'st . . . night* : take without right the peaceful night hours to walk in.
- l. 48. *Majesty . . . Denmark* : the King of Denmark.
- l. 57. *Sensible* : perceptible to the senses, plain.
- l. 61. *Norway* : the King of Norway.
- l. 62. *Parle* : conference.
- l. 63. *The sledded Polacks* : the Poles. Sledded means "borne in sledges," and is used here as a general descriptive epithet.
- l. 65. *Jump* : exactly.
- ll. 67-69. *In what particular . . . state* : What interpretation we are to put upon it, I cannot tell—but in the general drift of my opinion—it foretells some calamity to our kingdom.
- l. 72. *Toils . . . land* : Toils here used as a transitive verb, meaning "wears out," "exhausts." Subject used collectively, meaning subjects.
- l. 74. *Foreign mart, etc.* : such constant buying of war implements from abroad.

- l. 75. *Impress* : forced labour.  
 l. 83. *Emulate pride* : proud spirit of rivalry.  
 l. 89. *Seized* : possessed of.  
 l. 90. *Moiety competent* : adequate portion. Moiety literally means half.  
 l. 91. *Gaged* : pledged, staked.  
 l. 94. *Carriage . . . design'd* : the purport of the clause to that effect.  
 l. 96. *Unimproved* : untried.  
 l. 97. *Skirts* : outskirts.  
 l. 98. *Shark'd up . . . resolutes* : collected a bold and reckless band.  
 l. 99. *For food and diet* : following him for their keep. Diet means their general necessities other than food.  
 l. 107. *Romage* : bustle.  
 l. 109. *Well . . . sort* : it fits in with.  
 l. 113. *Palmy* : glorious, the palm being the sign of victory.  
 l. 118. *Moist star* : the moon, controlling the tides of "Neptune's empire."  
 l. 120. *Sick . . . eclipse* : was eclipsed for so long as to be in danger of perishing. *Doomsday* here means the day of death.  
 l. 122. *Harbingers* : forerunners.  
 l. 125. *Climatures* : here used to mean different portions of the country.  
 ll. 133-134. *Privy . . . avoid* : If you have secret knowledge of danger threatening your country, which may be warded off if revealed in time.  
 ll. 136-137. *Uphoarded . . . earth* : If you have buried treasure got by unjust means.  
 l. 140. *Partisan* : a long-shafted axe used by infantry in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.  
 l. 154. *Extravagant* : used in its literal sense, walking abroad.  
     *Erring* : wandering, straying.  
 l. 156. *Probation* : proof.  
 l. 162. *Strike* : exert ~~the~~ evil influence.  
 l. 163. *Takes* : strikes ~~with~~ disease.  
 l. 173. *As needful . . . duty* : as being what we owe him both by affection and duty.

*Scene II*

The Court. The King gives Laertes permission to leave for France. Hamlet is informed of the Ghost's appearance. He determines to watch that night.

- l. 9. *Jointress* : in the sense of possessor of joint sovereignty with the King.
- l. 10. *Defeated* : incomplete.
- l. 11. With one bright, one weeping eye.
- l. 14. *Barr'd* : neglected.
- l. 21. *Colleagued . . . advantage* : thinking, too, of the advantage to be gained by it.
- l. 23. *Importing* : demanding.
- l. 24. *With all bonds of law* : under a perfectly legal agreement.
- l. 31. *Gait* : proceeding.
- l. 33. *Subject* : cf. Scene I. l. 72.
- l. 38. *Dilated* : expressed at length.
- l. 39. *Commend your duty* : be proof of your duty.
- l. 45. *Lose your voice* : waste your words.
- l. 60. *Hard* : unwilling.
- l. 64. *Cousin* : used merely to mean kinsman, relation.
- l. 65. *A little . . . kind* : Many explanations have been given of this punning line. The most likely meaning seems to be : "There is something more than mere relationship between us, but not the kindly feeling that should go with it."
- l. 67. Hamlet means that he is too much in the sun of the Court flattery ; he speaks bitterly. A play on the words, son and sun, may be intended and perhaps a reference to an old proverb, "Out of heaven's blessing into the warm sun" (*i.e.* "out of house and home").
- l. 68. *Nighted colour* : refers to the mourning which he still wears, unlike the rest of the Court.
- l. 69. *Denmark* : the king.
- l. 70. *Vailed* : cast down.
- l. 75. *Particular with thee* : special to you.
- l. 92. *Obsequious sorrow* : sorrow proper to the obsequies or funeral.
- l. 99. As anything most obvious to the senses.
- l. 113. Wittenberg University. This is an anachronism,

- of course, as the University was actually founded in 1502.
- l. 115. *Bend* : incline your mind.
  - l. 127. *Rouse* : drinking bout. Cf. carouse.  
*Bruit* : resound.
  - l. 132. *Canon* : decree.
  - l. 134. *Uses* : practices, doings.
  - l. 137. *Merely* : solely.
  - l. 140. *Hyperion . . . satyr* : the sun-god compared with a beast half-goat, half-man.
  - l. 141. *Beteem* : allow.
  - ll. 144–145. *As if . . . fed on* : as though her love increased the more it was gratified.
  - l. 149. *Niobe* : daughter of Tantalus, and wife of Amphion. Proud of the number of her children, she boasted her superiority over Leto, mother of Apollo and Artemis, who in revenge slew all her children. Niobe herself was changed by Zeus into a stone, which perpetually shed tears.
  - l. 150. *Discourse of reason* : power of reason.
  - l. 155. Had ceased to flood her sore eyes.
  - l. 156. *Post* : hasten.
  - l. 164. *Whar make you from* : What are you doing away from.
  - l. 167. *Good even, sir* : to Bernardo.
  - ll. 192–193. *Season . . . ear* : mix your wonder with close attention.
  - l. 200. *Armed at point* : in full armour.  
*Cap-a-pe* : from head to foot.
  - l. 204. *Truncheon* : staff of office.
  - l. 228. *Beaver* : lower part of the face-guard of a helmet.
  - l. 238. *Grizzled* : grey.
  - l. 240. *Sable silver'd* : black with threads of silver.
  - l. 246. *Tenable in your silence* : kept quiet.

### Scene III

The Polonius household. Advice from Laertes to Ophelia, from Polonius to Laertes, from Polonius to Ophelia. Departure of Laertes.

- l. 2. *Winds . . . benefit* : when there is a favourable wind.

- l. 3. *Convoy is assistant* : ship sailing in that direction.  
 l. 6. *Toy in blood* : a mere impulse.  
 l. 7. *Primy* : belonging to early spring.  
 l. 8. *Forward* : precocious.  
 l. 9. The perfume lasting but for a minute.  
 ll. 11-14. *For nature . . . withal* : It is not merely a man's body that grows, but as the body grows the mind and soul also develop.  
 l. 15. *Cautel* : trickery.  
 l. 16. *Virtue of his will* : good intentions.  
 l. 17. *Weigh'd* : taken into consideration. Hamlet owing to his position cannot marry as he likes.  
 l. 27. *Deed* : effect.  
 l. 28. He cannot go further than he is allowed by the general opinion of the country.  
 ll. 36-37. *The chariest . . . moon* : The most prudent of maidens is certainly generous enough of her beauty if she allows even the moon to gaze on it.  
 ll. 39-40. *The canker . . . disclosed* : the canker worm blights the first flowers of spring, even before their buds are opened.  
 l. 42. *Contagious blastments* : pernicious blasts.  
     *Imminent* : apt to happen.  
 l. 51. *Recks* : heeds.  
     *Rede* : advice.  
 l. 59. *Character* : Write indelibly.  
 l. 61. *Familiar . . . vulgar* : Be sociable, but do not make yourself cheap.  
 l. 62. *Adoption tried* : When you have tested the friends you have adopted.  
 l. 64. *Dull thy palm* : spoil your sense of touch, lose your discrimination.  
 l. 69. *Censure* : opinion.  
 l. 77. *Husbandry* : economy.  
 ll. 94-95. *As so . . . caution* : as I have been informed, by way of warning.  
 l. 99. *Tenders* : offers.  
 l. 102. *Unsifted* : inexperienced.  
 l. 108. *To crack . . . phrase* : not to ride the phrase to death.  
 l. 109. *Tender me a fool* : make me look a fool.  
 l. 115. *Springes* : traps.

- ll. 122–123. *Set your entreatments . . . parley*: do not be on such terms with him that he can feel that he has only to summon you to surrender.
- l. 125. *Larger . . . walk*: he is allowed more licence.
- l. 127. *Brokers*: go-betweens.
- l. 128. *Investments*: clothes.
- l. 129. Nothing but advocates of disgraceful proposals.
- l. 131. *This is for all*: to sum up.
- l. 133. *Slander*: misuse.

*Scene iv*

The battlements again. The Ghost appears and calls Hamlet apart.

- l. 9. *Wassail*: revelry.  
*Swaggering up-spring reels* may have two explanations:  
 (a) Up-spring (the Hüpfau) was a wild German dance.  
 It is used here as an epithet for reels, meaning dances.  
 (b) It is another word for up-start, referring to the king, in which case reels is a verb.
- l. 10. *Rhenish*: Rhenish wine.
- l. 12. *Triumph . . . pledge*: celebrating the triumphant act of drinking a toast. (Cf. Scene II. ll. 125–127.) Hamlet speaks with great bitterness.
- l. 18. *Tax'd*: reproached.
- l. 19. *Clepe*: call.
- l. 20. *Addition*: good name. They soil our good name by calling us swine.
- ll. 21–22. *From our . . . attribute*: it robs us of the best part of our reputation for courage, even though our achievements are performed with the highest chivalry and bravery. He means that their courage would be attributed to the influence of liquor.
- l. 23. So often in the case of individuals some inherited blemish for which they are not responsible, or some unfortunate habit, may outweigh in popular estimate their excellent qualities.
- l. 24. *Mole*: blemish.
- l. 25. *As*: to wit.
- l. 27. *Complexion*: temperament, characteristic.
- l. 28. *Pales and forts*: fortifications.

- l. 30. *Plausible* : pleasing.
- ll. 36-38. *The dram . . . scandal* : a small amount of evil in a man's character may obliterate all the good in other people's eyes.
- l. 37. *Dout* : literally, do out.
- l. 47. *Canonized* : over which the burial-service has been performed.
- l. 48. *Cerements* : grave-clothes.
- ll. 54-56. *And we . . . souls* : and us, who are ignorant of the secrets of Nature, to be convulsed with thoughts beyond the grasp of our intelligence.
- ll. 59-60. As if it wished to tell you something privately.
- l. 75. *Toys of desperation* : desperate fancies.
- l. 83. *Nemean lion* : Hercules was called upon as one of his labours to slay the lion of Nemea. The lion's skin was so thick that no weapon could pierce it. Hercules crushed it to death in his arms. *Nerve* here means sinew or muscle, a meaning Shakespeare often gave it.
- l. 85. *Lets* : prevents.

*Scene v*

The Ghost reveals how he was murdered by Claudius, and enjoins revenge. Hamlet makes his promise. He tells Horatio and Marcellus nothing of what has passed, but swears them to silence about the Ghost's appearance.

- l. 12. *Nature* : life.
- l. 19. *An* : on.
- l. 20. *Porpentine* : porcupine.
- l. 21. *Eternal blazon* : this divulging of eternal things.
- l. 33. *Lethe* : the river of the infernal regions, whose waters brought forgetfulness.
- l. 38. *Rankly abused* : grossly deceived.
- l. 61. *Secure* : unguarded.
- l. 62. *Hebenon* : either ebony or henbane.
- l. 63. *Porches* : entrances.
- ll. 68-69. *Posset . . . milk* : thickens and curdles like acid dropped into milk.
- ll. 71-73. Immediately an eruption spread over my skin, like a leper's, covering my body with a loathsome crust.

- l. 77. *Unhouseled* : without having received the Sacrament.  
*Disappointed* : unprepared.  
*Unaneled* : without having received extreme unction.
- l. 89. *Matin* : morning.  
l. 97. *Globe* : head.  
l. 99. *Fond* : frivolous.  
l. 100. *Pressures* : impressions.  
l. 107. *Tables* : tablet.  
l. 116. *Come, bird, come* : this is the cry of the falconer to his hawk in the air. Hamlet catches up Horatio's falconer's call and answers it.  
l. 133. *Whirling* : extravagant.  
l. 150. *Truepenny* : a familiar term—gaffer, old fellow.  
l. 156. *Hic et ubique?* : here and everywhere?  
l. 163. *Pioneer* : engineer.  
l. 174. *Encumber'd* : folded.

*Act II**Scene 1*

In Polonius' house. Polonius is certain that Hamlet's madness is due to love of Ophelia. He decides to tell the King.

- l. 7. *Danskers* : Danes.  
l. 8. *Keep* : lodge.  
l. 10. *Encompassment* : roundabout means.  
l. 12. Come nearer to the main point than these questions about details will bring you.  
l. 13. Pretend to know him slightly.  
l. 28. Make the accusation not sound too bad.  
l. 31. *Quaintly* : ingeniously.  
l. 32. *Taints of liberty* : the result of too much freedom.  
l. 35. *Of general assault* : to which all are liable.  
l. 38. *Fetch of wit* : a plan which will be justified by success.  
ll. 42-45. Sound the person you are talking to. If he has seen the youth you speak of guilty of the crimes you have mentioned, be sure he will show agreement by some such words as the following.  
l. 58. *O'ertook in's rouse* : overcome by drink.  
l. 63. By indirect means.

1. 63. *Windlass*: literally a winding.  
*Bias*: weight put into a bowl, to make its course curved.
1. 69. Use your own observation.
1. 71. Let him follow his own bent.
1. 77. *Foul'd*: muddy.
1. 78. *Down-gyved*: fallen down round his ankles like fetters.
1. 101. *Property*: character, nature.  
*Fordoes*: destroys.
1. 110. *Quoted*: judged.
1. 112. It is as natural for us old people to believe too much in our own long-sightedness. . . .
- II. 116-117. *Which . . . love*: if I do not tell the king about Hamlet's love, he is likely to be more grieved than he would be angry if I do tell him.

### *Scene II*

In the castle. The question of Hamlet's madness troubles everyone. Polonius tells the King that Ophelia is the cause. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, sent for by the King, attempt to sound Hamlet without success. The Players arrive. Hamlet hits on his plan to test the King's guilt.

1. 2. *Moreover*: apart from the fact that.
1. 6. *Sith*: since.
1. 13. *Vouchsafe your rest*: consent to stay.
1. 22. *Gentry*: courtesy.
1. 30. *In . . . bent*: with all our energies.
1. 41. *Joyfully*: joyful at the success of their mission.
1. 52. *Fruit*: dessert, i.e. a pleasant conclusion.
1. 61. After our first audience with him he sent out orders. . . .
1. 67. *Falsely borne in hand*: imposed upon.
1. 86. *Expostulate*: discuss.
1. 95. More facts and less talk.
1. 105. *Perpend*: consider carefully what I am going to say.
1. 123. *Whilst . . . him*: while he lives  
*Machine*: body.

- I. 136. *I.e.* remained silent.  
 I. 137. Or winked at what was going on.  
 I. 143. *Resort* : company.  
 I. 148. *Watch* : sleeplessness.  
 I. 163. *Arras* : tapestry.  
 I. 169. I'll tackle him at once.  
 I. 182. *Carrion* : dead flesh.  
 I. 199. *Purging* : exuding.  
 I. 207. *Method* : sense.  
 I. 261. Then beggars are real, and ambitious monarchs  
and heroes but shadows.  
 I. 266. *Sort* : put you on a level with.  
 II. 268–269. *In the beaten way of friendship* : in the ordinary  
way of friendship.  
 II. 285–286. *Consonancy . . . youth* : the fact of our having  
been brought up together.  
 I. 286. By anything even more sacred to which a more  
skilful advocate could appeal.  
 I. 295. *Prevent* : go before.  
 II. 295–296. *Your secrecy . . . feather* : your promise of  
secrecy to the King and Queen will not suffer.  
 I. 302. *Fretted* : ornamented.  
 I. 306. *Express* : suited to his purpose.  
 I. 318. *Lenten* : poor.  
 I. 319. *Coted* : passed.  
 I. 323. *Target* : shield.  
 I. 326. *Tickle o' the sere* : ready to laugh at the smallest  
joke. The sere is a kind of catch in a gun-lock, which  
keeps the gun at half-cock. *Tickle o' the sere* implies  
“ready to go off at the slightest touch.”  
 II. 331–332. *Their residence . . . ways* : they would have  
done better, both from the point of view of reputation  
and business, to have remained in the city.  
 II. 333–334. The innovation referred to is probably the  
permission given in Shakespeare's day to children to  
act at the regularly licensed theatres. This would have  
the effect of driving the older actors out of the city.  
 I. 340. *Aery* : nest.  
*Eyases* : young hawks.  
 I. 341. *On the top of question* : Declaim at the top of their  
shrill childish voices.  
 II. 341–342. *Tyrannically clapped* : fiercely applauded.

- ll. 344-345. *Many wearing . . . thither*: many grown-up men (*i.e.* those who wear swords) are afraid to go to the theatre because of the attacks made on them by the authors of the plays.
- l. 347. *Escoted*: paid.
- l. 348. *Quality*: profession.
- l. 352. *Exclaim . . . succession*: abuse or satirise the older actors whom they will one day succeed.
- l. 354. *Tarre*: incite.
- l. 361. *Carry it away*: win the day.
- ll. 362-363. *Hercules . . . too*: perhaps an allusion to the Globe Theatre, whose sign was Hercules supporting the globe.
- l. 365. *Mows*: grimaces.
- l. 367. *His picture in little*: his miniature.
- ll. 372-374. Let me show courtesy to you in this manner, lest my welcome to the players, which must be formal and civil, seems more like a true welcome than yours.
- l. 381. *Handsaw*: heron.
- l. 393. *Roscius*: a famous Roman actor, a friend of Cicero.
- l. 402. *Seneca*: Lucius Annaeus Seneca, at one time tutor to Nero, author of tragedies.  
*Plautus*: T. Maccius Plautus, first and most famous of the Roman comic dramatists.
- l. 403. *For the law . . . liberty*: for the formal type of drama and the free and unfettered kind.
- l. 405. *Jephthah*: one of the twelve judges of Israel. Before going into battle against the Ammonites he vowed that if he were victorious, he would sacrifice to the Lord the first thing he met on his return. His daughter was the first to welcome him home.
- l. 421. *Row*: stanza.
- l. 422. *Abridgement*: interruption.
- l. 425. *Valanced*: fringed with a beard.
- l. 429. *Chopine*: contrivances which ladies wore under their shoes to make them look taller.
- l. 439. *Caviare to the general*: above the heads of the public.
- ll. 440-441. *Cried . . . mine*: carried greater weight than mine.

1. 443. *Sallets* : literally savoury herbs. He means there was nothing "spicy."
1. 445. *Affection* : affectation.
1. 447. *By very . . . fine* : with more real beauty than spurious splendour.
1. 448. Eneas after the fall of Troy visited Dido, Queen of Carthage. Dido fell in love with him and committed suicide after his departure. Shakespeare may have had in mind the play "Dido, Queen of Carthage," left unfinished by Marlowe and completed by Nash.
1. 450. *Priam's slaughter* : Priam, the old king of Troy, was slain by Pyrrhus after the entry of the Greeks into the city. He was trying to defend his wife Hecuba, when he was killed.
1. 452. *Hyrcanian beast* : tiger.
1. 456. *Ominous horse* : the Greeks constructed a huge wooden horse, which they said was an offering to the gods to secure a satisfactory journey home, but in which they concealed their soldiers. The Trojans dragged the horse into their city for a statue. At night the Greek soldiers emerged, opened the gates of Troy and fired the city.
1. 459. *Total gules* : one mass of blood.
1. 461. Caked into a thick crust by the heat of the streets.
1. 471. *Rebellious . . . arm* : refusing to obey his arm.
1. 477. *His* : its.
1. 478. *Takes . . . ear* : distracts his attention, stuns him.
1. 481. *Painted* : motionless as a figure in a picture.
1. 485. *Rack* : clouds.
1. 486. *Orb* : earth.
1. 490. *Cyclops* : The Cyclops were Titans, who assisted Vulcan to forge armour for the gods and heroes.
1. 496. *Fellies* : outer circumference. Fortune is depicted as standing on a rolling wheel.
1. 497. *Nave* : hub of the wheel.
1. 503. *Mobled* : muffled.
1. 508. *Bisson rheum* : blinding tears.
1. 510. *O'er-teemed* : exhausted.
1. 519. Would have drawn tears from the eyes of heaven.
1. 520. *Passion* : pity.

- ll. 524-525. *Well bestowed*: given comfortable quarters.  
 l. 554. *Conceit*: imagination, conception.  
 ll. 557-558. *Whole function . . . conceit*: his whole being giving expression to what he felt.  
 l. 569. *Peak*: falter, lose resolution.  
 l. 573. *Defeat*: ruin.  
 l. 582. *Region kites*: all the kites in this region.  
 l. 601. *Tent*: probe.  
 l. 608. *Relative*: direct, convincing.

*Act III**Scene I*

In the castle. Still baffled by his appearance of madness, the King arranges with Polonius to overhear a conversation between Hamlet and Ophelia. The King, doubtful whether Hamlet's madness is real, thinks of sending him to England.

- l. 1. *Drift of circumstance*: roundabout means.  
 l. 7. *Forward*: willing.  
 l. 14. *Assay*: try to persuade him.  
 l. 17. *O'er-raught*: overtook.  
 l. 26. *Give . . . edge*: egg him on.  
 l. 29. *Closely*: privately.  
 l. 32. *Espials*: spies.  
 ll. 45-46. *That show . . . loneliness*: it will seem quite natural that you should be sitting here alone if you pretend to be reading.  
 ll. 47-49. *That with . . . himself*: we cover up devilish intentions with an appearance of sanctity.  
 l. 56. *To be or not to be*: to live or to commit suicide.  
 l. 74. *Patient merit . . . takes*: that deserving people have to endure at the hands of the unworthy.  
 l. 75. *Quietus*: release.  
 l. 76. *Bare bodkin*: an unsheathed dagger.  
*Fardels*: burdens.  
 l. 79. *Bourn*: confines.  
 l. 85. *Cast*: tinge, shade.  
 l. 86. *Of great pitch and moment*: lofty and momentous.  
 l. 89. *Orisons*: prayers.  
 l. 93. *Remembrances*: gifts.  
 l. 103. *Honest*: virtuous.

- I. 108. *Discourse to* : intercourse with.  
 II. 111-113. It is easier for beauty to corrupt virtue than  
     for virtue to assert its own power over beauty.  
 II. 117-118. We cannot so graft virtue on to our original  
     nature that we shall not have a smack of evil about us.  
 II. 147-148. *Your wantonness your ignorance* : pretend that  
     your immodesty is girlish simplicity.  
 I. 162. *Blown* : in its full bloom.  
 I. 163. *Ecstasy* : madness.  
 II. 169-170. And I suspect that when it is hatched it  
     will prove to be something dangerous.  
 II. 177-178. *Puts him thus . . . himself* : has made him  
     unlike himself.  
 I. 186. *Round* : blunt, plain-spoken.

*Scene II*

The play-scene. The play is acted before the King, who  
     rushes from the hall in horror. Hamlet is summoned  
     to his mother's room.

- I. 11. *Groundlings* : people standing in the pit.  
 I. 14. *Termagant* : an imaginary deity worshipped by  
     the ~~Mohammedans~~, represented in the mystery plays  
     as a violent and overbearing character.  
     • *Out-herods Herod* : rages more violently than Herod.  
     Another reference to the old mystery plays.  
 I. 26. *Come tardy off* : under-acted.  
 I. 28. *Censure . . . one* : the opinion of one judicious  
     critic.  
 I. 35. *Journeymen* : apprentices, unskilled workmen.  
 I. 38. *Indifferently* : considerably.  
 I. 49. *Presently* : at once.  
 I. 56. As ever I had anything to do with.  
 I. 61. *Candied* : sugared.  
 I. 62. *Pregnant* : ready to kneel.  
 I. 63. *Thrift* : advantage.  
 I. 74. With all possible concentration.  
 I. 81. *Occulted* : hidden.  
 I. 82. *Unkennel* : disclose.  
 I. 85. *Stithy* : smithy.  
 I. 88. In our impression of his behaviour.

- l. 94. *Chameleon's dish* : the chameleon was supposed to feed on air. Hamlet pretends to misunderstand the king's use of the word "fare."
- l. 96. *Capons* : cocks.
- l. 119. *Your only jig-maker* : only to amuse you.
- l. 125. *Suit of sables* : rich attire.
- ll. 129-130. *Hobby-horse* : a figure in the Morris dance. The figure of a horse was fastened round a man's waist. Latterly, it appears, the hobby-horse was often omitted, which gave rise to a popular ballad, which Hamlet quotes here.
- l. 133. *Miching mallecho* : secret mischief. *Malhecho* is Spanish for an evil deed.
- l. 135. *Argument* : plot.
- l. 148. *Posy of a ring* : a motto, such as was often engraved on a ring.
- l. 151. *Phoebus' cart* : the sun-god's chariot.
- l. 152. *Salt wash* : the sea.  
*Tellus' orbed ground* : the earth.
- l. 155. *Hymen* : the god of marriage.
- l. 161. *Distrust* : am anxious about you.
- l. 163. *Hold quantity* : are proportionate.
- l. 164. There is none of either, or else a great deal of both.
- l. 170. *Operant* : active.  
*Leave to do* : cease to perform.
- l. 177. *Wormwood* : Hamlet means, "This will be very bitter to the king."
- l. 178. *Instances* : inducements.
- l. 179. *Respects of thrift* : material considerations.
- l. 185. Powerful at first, but not lasting.
- l. 191. Destroys both the passions and the resolutions made under their influence.
- l. 205. *Seasons* : makes.
- l. 215. *Anshor's* : anchorite's, hermit's.  
*Scope* : fate.
- l. 216. May every influence adverse to happiness (that makes the face of joy turn pale). . . .
- l. 233. *Tropically* : figuratively.
- l. 241. *Chorus* : the character or characters who explained the action in ancient drama.
- ll. 242-243. If I could see you and your lover together,

I could tell what was passing between you. At a puppet-show there would be someone to explain the action or perhaps speak dialogue.

- I. 245. *Take your husbands* : i.e. for better or worse.
- I. 246. *Leave . . . begin* : addressed to the actor.
- I. 249. *Confederate season* : the opportunity conspiring to suit the murderer.
- I. 251. *Hecate's ban* : Hecate's curse. Hecate was the goddess of witchcraft.
- I. 268. *This* : the success of my play.  
*Forest of feathers* : appropriate actor's costume.
- II. 268-269. *If the rest . . . me* : if I can't get my living in any other way.
- II. 269-270. *Two Provincial roses* : rosettes as big as the roses of Provence.
- I. 270. *Razed shoes* : ornamented with cut patterns.  
*Cry* : company (lit. pack).
- I. 272. Actors in Shakespeare's day were paid a share of the receipts.
- I. 274. *Damon* : the friendship between Damon and Pythias was proverbial.
- I. 277. *Pajock* : peacock. Hamlet substitutes this for the word that would rhyme with was—ass probably.
- I. 285. *Recorders* : a wind instrument of the flute type.
- I. 318. *Admiration* : astonishment (not approval).
- I. 327. *Pickers and stealers* : hands.
- I. 334. *While . . . grows* : The proverb concludes “oft starves the silly steed.”
- II. 337-338. Why do you try to get to windward of me and trap me? A figure from stalking game.  
*Toil* : trap.
- I. 339. If in the execution of my duty I have gone too far, it is my love for you that makes me seem rude.
- I. 348. *Ventages* : air-holes.
- I. 362. *Fret* : annoy, but with a pun on the same word in the sense of the lines that guide the fingering on a stringed instrument.
- I. 386. *Nero* : the Roman Emperor, killed his mother Agrippina.
- I. 390. *Shent* : reproved.
- I. 391. *Seals* : seals must be fixed to a document to make it valid.

*Scene III*

In the castle. Hamlet on his way to his mother's room discovers the King at prayer. He has thoughts of slaying him, but forbears.

1. 5. *Terms . . . estate* : my position as king.
1. 7. *Provide* : we will make all provisions for our journey.
1. 13. *Noyance* : danger, harm.
1. 15. *Cease of majesty* : a monarch when he dies.
1. 20. *Mortised* : fixed.
1. 21. *Annexment* : appendage.
1. 37. *Primal . . . curse* : the curse of Cain, who slew Abel.
- ll. 46-50. Of what avail is mercy except to mitigate wrath, and what is the purpose of prayer but to prevent us from sinning or win us pardon when we have sinned ?
1. 60. *Buys out the law* : the law is bribed by the very wealth which has been wrongfully acquired.
1. 68. *Limed* : entangled. Lit. caught with birdlime.
1. 75. *Scann'd* : interpreted.
1. 80. *Grossly . . . bread* : in the midst of his coarse earthly pleasures.
1. 88. *Hent* : opportunity.

*Scene IV*

The Queen's room. Polonius conceals himself to overhear the conversation. Hamlet, hearing him, slays him in mistake for the King. Hamlet exhorts his mother. The Ghost appears again to "whet his almost blunted purpose."

1. 4. *Sconce* : hide, ensconce.
1. 14. *Rood* : cross.
1. 24. *For a ducat* : I'll wager a ducat.
1. 32. *I took thee for thy better* : I thought it was the King.
1. 46. *Contraction* : the marriage contract.
1. 48. *Rhapsody of words* : empty utterance.
- ll. 49-51. The very earth is sick at the thought of what you have done, as though expecting the day of judgment.

- I. 52. *The index* : at the very beginning.
- I. 58. *Station* : bearing. Mercury, the messenger of the gods, was famous for his graceful bearing.
- I. 64. *Ear* : of corn.
- I. 67. *Batten* : grow fat.
- I. 73. *Apoplex'd* : paralysed.
- I. 74. *Ecstasy* : madness.
- II. 75-76. That it could not discriminate between men so different.
- I. 77. *Cozen'd* : cheated.  
*Hoodman blind* : Blind-man's buff.
- I. 81. *Mope* : be so stupid.
- I. 83. *Mutine* : mutiny.
- II. 84-87. Do not let virtue reprove the passionate impulses of youth when we see age giving way to them as freely, and making its riper faculties the tools of its desires.
- I. 90. *Grained* : deeply dyed.
- I. 91. As will not be washed out.
- I. 94. *Tithe* : tenth part.
- I. 95. *Vice of kings* : a buffoon of a king.
- I. 99. An allusion to the dress of the vice or buffoon.
- I. 110. Do not let her emotions overpower her.
- I. 111. *Coneeit* : imagination.
- II. 118-119. Your hair which was smoothed down starts up as though imbued with life.
- Excrements* : anything that grows out from the body, as hair, nails, etc.
- I. 124. *Capable* : susceptible ; capable of feeling.
- II. 125-126. *Convert . . . effects* : turn me from my attitude of sternness.
- I. 127. *Tears . . . blood* : instead of shedding blood, I shall shed tears.
- I. 141. *Would gambol from* : would be too light-headed to repeat.
- I. 148. *Compost* : manure.
- I. 150. *Pursy* : short-winded, i.e. from over-indulgence.
- II. 157-162. Good habits can be as easily acquired as evil.
- II. 179-181. Make you reveal that I am not mad in reality, but only simulating madness.
- I. 183. *Paddock* : toad.

1. 183. *Gib* : tom-cat.
1. 187. *Famous ape* : This allusion has never been traced. Presumably it refers to some fable in which the ape opened a basket containing live birds. Seeing the birds fly away he got into the basket and tried to imitate them, and broke his neck.
1. 200. *Hoist . . . petar* : blown into the air by his own engine of destruction.  
*Petar* : a war engine fitted with explosives, used for making a breach.
1. 204. *Set me packing* : hurry me off.

*Act IV**Scene I*

In the castle. The King learns of Polonius' death.

1. 11. *Brainish* : mad.
1. 17. *Providence* : foresight.
1. 18. *Out of haunt* : away from contact with anyone.
1. 22. *To . . . divulging* : Rather than let it be known.
1. 24. *Draw apart* : remove elsewhere.
1. 42. As unerringly as a cannon-shot to its mark.

*Scene II*

In the castle. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern question Hamlet.

1. 1. (The body is) in a safe place.
1. 13. *Besides . . . sponge* : That I should be questioned by a fellow like you, who would suck me dry.
1. 14. *Replication* : a reply.
11. 24-25. *A knavish . . . ear* : a fool does not understand knavish words, i.e. you are only a fool and not a rogue.
11. 31-32. *Hide fox, and all after* : an allusion to the game of Hide and Seek.

*Scene III*

In the castle. Hamlet is despatched to England.

1. 4. *Distracted* : foolish.
11. 6-7. People criticise the punishment and disregard the crime.
1. 9. *Deliberate pause* : the result of deliberate calculation.

- I. 22. *Politic worms* : a punning reference to the Diet of Worms.
- I. 43. *Tender* : hold dear.
- I. 47. *Associates tend* : your companions are ready.
- I. 50. *I see a cherub* : I have a guardian angel.
- I. 59. *Leans* : depends.
- I. 61. And my power will teach you the value of my friendship.
- I. 62. *Cicatrice* : scar.
- I. 63. *Free awe* : awe no longer compelled by force of arms.
- II. 64–65. *Thou . . . process* : thou may'st not disregard our royal command.
- I. 68. *Hectic* : fever.

*Scene iv*

On the journey. Hamlet, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern encounter the army of Fortinbras. Their activity moves Hamlet to self-reproach.

- I. 6. *We shall . . . eye* : we will see him personally and do homage.
- I. 22. *Ranker* : higher.
- II. 25–26. This silly quarrel will cost more than two thousand lives and twenty thousand ducats.
- I. 27. *Imposthume* : abscess, internal growth.
- I. 36. *Large discourse* : wide faculties.
- I. 39. *Fust* : grow mouldy.
- I. 46. *Gross* : plain.
- I. 50. Laughs at the unseen future.
- I. 63. That is too small to hold the armies fighting for it.
- I. 64. *Continent* : cover (lit. that which contains).

*Scene v*

Back in the castle. Ophelia loses her wits. Laertes returns, seeking revenge for Polonius' death. The King calms him.

- I. 6. *Spurns . . . straws* : grows angry over nothing.
- I. 9. *To collection* : to gather some meaning from it.
- I. 10. *Botch the words up* : adjust.

- l. 18. Every trifle seems to be the prologue of some disaster.
- l. 19. *Artless* : ignorant.
- l. 25. *Cockle hat* : Pilgrims wore cockle shells in their hats, as emblems of their having crossed the sea to the Holy Land. The disguise of a pilgrim was a favourite one with lovers. Romeo adopted it.
- l. 26. *Shoon* : shoes.
- l. 41. *'Ild* : shield.
- ll. 41-42. *They say . . . daughter* : an allusion to an old story, in which our Lord visited a baker's shop to ask for bread. The baker's daughter objected that her mother had given Him too big a piece. For this she was changed into an owl.
- l. 44. *Conceit . . . father* : Her imagination runs upon her father.
- l. 47. *Valentine's Day* : It was a common belief that the first two single people to meet upon St. Valentine's Day would become married.
- l. 66. *Greenly* : unwisely.
- l. 67. *In hugger-mugger* : in this hasty secret way.
- l. 72. Ponders over these bewildering events, takes part in nothing at court.
- l. 73. *Buzzers* : chatterers.
- ll. 75-77. Wherein, since they have no facts to go on, they will not hesitate to accuse me.
- l. 78. *Murdering-piece* : a cannon, which discharged case-shot. *I.e.* a miscellaneous collection of missiles, any one of which might be sufficient to cause death.
- l. 79. *Superfluous death* : therefore means that he might receive more than one fatal wound at once.
- l. 80. *Switzers* : Swiss guards.
- l. 82. *Overpeering . . . list* : sweeping over its boundary.
- l. 83. *Flats* : level country.
- l. 84. *In . . . head* : with a force of rioters.
- l. 88. *Ratifiers and props* : "antiquity" and "custom" are the "ratifiers and props." This gentleman is another Polonius.
- l. 93. *Counter* : in the wrong direction. A hunting term. To hunt counter was to hunt the wrong way of the scent.
- l. 114. I care not what happens in this world or the next.

- I. 122. You will revenge yourself on friend and foe alike, like a gambler who takes the stakes whether he has won or no.
- I. 126. *Life-rendering pelican*: the pelican was believed to nourish its young with its own life-blood.
- II. 137-138. We will exact full retribution, and even more, for the crime which has destroyed your reason.
- I. 143. It sends some precious token (*i.e.* Ophelia's reason) after the thing it loves (*i.e.* her father).
- I. 152. *The wheel*: Some explain this as meaning "the refrain," but more likely Ophelia imagined the song being sung at the spinning-wheel. No trace can be found of the song of the *false steward*.
- I. 154. This nonsense is more affecting than sense would be.
- I. 156. *Pansies*: from *pensées*.
- I. 160. *Fennel* and *columbines*: she gives these to the king. *Fennel* was symbolic of flattery, and *columbine* of ingratitude.
- I. 161. *Rue*: this to the queen. *Rue* was symbolic of sorrow.
- I. 163. *With a difference*. The Queen must wear it as a sign of repentance, Ophelia as a sign of grief.  
*Daisy*: emblem of deceit. Also probably given to the Queen.
- I. 164. *Violets*: emblem of faithfulness.
- I. 175. *Flaxen*: white as flax.  
*Poll*: head.
- II. 181-182. You will wrong me if you refuse my help at this sorrowful time.
- I. 185. *Collateral*: indirect.
- I. 186. *Touch'd*: implicated.
- I. 193. *Hatchment*: memorial tablet, on which the armorial bearings of the dead man were depicted.

*Scene vi*

- In the castle. Horatio receives a letter from Hamlet.
- II. 16-17. *Put on a compelled valour*: were forced to show fight.
- I. 25. *Bore of the matter*: the metaphor is that of a shot too light for the calibre of a gun.

*Scene vii*

In the castle. The King receives a letter from Hamlet, telling of his return. He and Laertes concoct a plot against his life. Ophelia is drowned.

- l. 1. *Acquittance* : acquittal.
- l. 9. *You mainly . . . up* : you had such strong inducement to do so.
- l. 10. *Unsinew'd* : weak.
- l. 14. *Conjunctive to* : an essential part of.
- l. 18. *Gender* : people.
- l. 20. A spring whose water contains lime has the power of crusting over objects dipped into it, so that they become petrified. No particular spring seems to be indicated.
- l. 21. *Convert . . . gyves* : convert his fetters into ornaments.
- l. 27. *If praises . . . again* : If I may speak of her as she used to be.
- l. 28. *On mount* : conspicuously (lit. on a hill).
- l. 50. *Abuse* : trick.
- l. 67. *Uncharge the practice* : think there is no evil in our plan.
- l. 73. *Parts* : accomplishments.
- l. 76. *Siege* : rank.
- l. 77. A mere trifling amusement of youth.
- ll. 87-88. *As had . . . beast* : As though he and his beast were one body and spirit. *Topp'd my thought*, surpassed anything I had imagined possible.
- l. 89. *In forgery . . . tricks* : in imagining tricks and feats.
- l. 95. *Made confession of you* : acknowledged your superiority.
- l. 100. *Scrimers* : fencers.
- l. 105. *Play* : have a fencing match. Cf. swordplay.
- l. 111. *I.e.* love is ruled by time.
- l. 112. *Passages of proof* : instances I have seen.
- l. 116. *Still* : always.
- l. 117. *Plurisy* : surfeit.
- l. 118. Dies of its own excess.
- l. 122. *Spendthrift sigh* : There was a superstition that a sigh drew blood from the heart and shortened life.

- l. 127. *Sanctuarize* : be a sanctuary for.  
 l. 134. *Remiss* : careless.  
 l. 136. *Peruse the foils* : examine the swords.  
 l. 138. *Unbated* : having no button at its tip.  
*A pass of practice* : with a deliberately treacherous thrust.
- l. 141. *Mountebank* : quack doctor.  
 l. 142. *Mortal* : deadly.  
 l. 143. *Cataplasm* : poultice.  
 l. 144. *Simples* : herbs.  
 l. 145. *Under the moon* : herbs gathered by moonlight were supposed to have special properties.  
 l. 147. *Contagion* : poison.  
 l. 151. *Drift . . . performance* : if we should carry it out so badly that our purpose shows through.  
 l. 153. *Back* : something in reserve.  
 l. 154. *Blast in proof* : fail when put to the proof.  
 l. 160. *Nonce* : occasion.  
 l. 161. *Stuck* : thrust.  
 l. 167. *Hoar* : grey.  
 l. 169. *Crow-flowers* : buttercups.  
*Long purples* : purple orchids.  
 l. 170. *Coronet weeds* : weeds she had woven into a crown.  
 l. 171. *Sliver* : branch.  
 l. 176. *Incapable* : unable to realise.  
*Distress* : plight.  
 l. 177. *Indued* : fitted for life in the water.  
 l. 185. *Trick* : habit.  
 l. 187. *The woman . . . out* : this unmanly outbreak will be over.  
 l. 189. *This folly* : these foolish tears.

*Act V**Scene 1*

A churchyard. Hamlet converses with the gravediggers. Ophelia's funeral. Hamlet wrestles with Laertes.

- l. 4. *Straight* : at once.  
*Crowner* : coroner.  
 l. 9. *Se offendendo* : a blunder. He means "se defendendo," in self-defence.  
 l. 12. *Argal* : therefore. A corruption of ergo.

- l. 14. *Goodman* : old fellow.  
*Delver* : digger.
- l. 22. *Quest* : inquest.
- l. 29. *Even Christian* : fellow Christian.
- l. 31. *Hold up* : continue.
- l. 33. *Bore arms* : had a coat of arms ; the pun is obvious.
- l. 52. *Unyoke* : you can cease work.
- l. 60. *Yaughan* : probably the name of a tavern-keeper near the Globe Theatre.
- l. 61. *Stoup* : flagon.
- ll. 62-65. Here and in the two subsequent verses the Clown misquotes and often makes meaningless an old ballad, "The Aged Lover Renounceth Love," found in Tottel's "Miscellany." The "O" and the "ah" are not part of the song, but the grunts of the gravedigger as he works.
- ll. 68-69. He has become callous through long habit.
- ll. 70-71. The hand which is least employed in rough work has the greatest delicacy.
- l. 77. *Jowls* : dashes.
- l. 79. *Politician* : schemer.
- l. 80. *O'er-reaches* : has a double sense : (1) reaches out with his spade, (2) gets the better of.
- l. 90. *Chapless* : with the jaw missing.  
*Mazzard* : head.
- l. 93. *Loggats* : a game somewhat resembling bowls.
- l. 100. *Quiddities* : nice distinctions.
- l. 101. *Quilletts* : quibbles.
- l. 103. *Sconce* : head.
- ll. 105-107. *Statutes and recognizances, fines and recoveries* are fictions of law : terms used in the transfer of landed property.
- Recovery with double voucher* : so-called, because two persons are called upon to warrant the tenant's title.
- l. 111. *Indentures* : agreements made out in duplicate upon a single sheet. The sheet was cut in two in a crooked indented line ; in case of dispute the fitting of the two parts together was a proof of its genuineness.
- l. 112. *This box* : i.e. the coffin.
- ll. 117-118. Those who trust entirely to parchment are fools.

- I. 128. *The quick* : the living.
- I. 139. *Absolute* : precise.
- I. 140. *By the card* : exactly.
- I. 142. *Picked* : smart.
- I. 144. *Kibe* : chilblain.
- I. 209. *Curiously* : ingeniously.
- I. 211. *With modesty* : without exaggeration.
- I. 216. *Imperious* : imperial.
- I. 219. *Flaw* : gust of wind.
- I. 222. *Maimed* : incomplete.
- I. 224. *Estate* : rank.
- I. 226. *What ceremony else?* : what further ceremony is there to be performed? He means, "Surely there are other rites than these?"
- II. 229–230. We have given her as elaborate rites as we have authority to do; the manner of her death was doubtful.
- I. 231. *Great command* : i.e. the king's order.
- I. 233. *For* : instead of.
- I. 234. *Shards* : bits of broken crockery.
- I. 235. *Crants* : coronet, worn by maidens till they were married.
- I. 236. *Maiden strewments* : the strewing of flowers upon the bier, common at the funeral of a maid or wife.
- II. 236–237. *Bringing home . . . burial* : As the bride was brought to her husband's home with bell and wedding festivity, so is dead Ophelia brought to her last resting-place with bell and burial.
- I. 245. *Howling* : i.e. in hell.
- I. 251. *Most ingenious sense* : i.e. her reason. \*
- I. 256. *Pelion* : a lofty mountain range in Thessaly. The giants, at war with the gods, are said to have tried to pile Ossa and Olympus on Pelion to try and reach the heavens.
- I. 259. *Conjures . . . stars* : has such magic power as to arrest the course of the planets. An allusion to the charms of witches, who were supposed to be able to arrest the course of the moon and stars.
- I. 276. *Forbear him* : do not touch him.
- I. 279. *Eisel* : vinegar. Perhaps, however, the name of some river is intended.
- I. 282. *Quick* : alive.

- l. 286. *Ossa* : see note on l. 256.  
 l. 290. *Golden couplets* : The dove generally sits upon two eggs ; the birds when hatched are covered with a yellow down.  
*Disclosed* : i.e. by the breaking of the eggs.  
 l. 298. *Present push* : we'll bring the matter to a head.

*Scene II*

The Court. The plot of the King and Laertes is put into action. The fencing-match. The Queen is poisoned. Hamlet kills the King. Deaths of Laertes and Hamlet.

- l. 6. *Mutines in the bilboes* : mutineers in chains.  
 l. 18. *Their grand commission* : the message carried by Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.  
 l. 20. *Larded* : tricked out with.  
 l. 21. *Importing* : concerning.  
 l. 22. The terrible dangers that threatened so long as I was left alive.  
*Bugs* : bugbears, terrors.  
 l. 23. *On the supervise* : immediately on reading it.  
*No leisure bated* : without any delay.  
 l. 24. *Stay* : wait for.  
 l. 31. *They* : his brains.  
 l. 33. *Statists* : statesmen.  
 l. 41. *Wheaten garland* : wheat being symbolic of peace and plenty.  
 l. 42. *Comma* : link.  
 l. 47. *Not . . . allowed* : not allowing them time even to confess their sins and obtain absolution.  
 l. 48. Even in that detail Providence directed the scheme.  
 l. 50. *Model* : copy.  
 l. 52. *Subscribed* : signed.  
 ll. 58-59. *Their defeat . . . grow* : Their death is due to their own intrusion into the affair.  
 ll. 60-62. It is dangerous when cowards come between the fiercely thrusting weapons of two mighty opponents.  
 l. 63. *Does it . . . upon* : is it not my duty?  
 l. 65. Standing between me and the succession to the throne.

ll. 66–67. *Thrown out . . . cozenage* : fished with such cunning for my death.

*Angle* : fish-hook.

*Proper* : my own.

ll. 77–78. *For, by the image . . . his* : I can see Laertes' grief reflected in my own. Both had lost their fathers, violently killed.

ll. 87–90. *Let a beast . . . mess* : If a beast has plenty of property he feeds at the king's table.

*Crib* : lit. manger.

*Mess* : lit. a dish of meat.

*Chough* : jackdaw.

*Dirt* : land.

ll. 108–109. *Excellent differences* : different excellencies.

ll. 110–111. *Card . . . gentry* : a very guide-book to good manners.

ll. 113–121. Hamlet is burlesquing Osric's affected way of talking :—His description suffers nothing at your hands, though I know to make a full list of all his good qualities would be too much for anyone's memory, and such a full description would move slowly in comparison with the speed with which thoughts of his accomplishments rush into the mind. But to praise him strictly according to his merits, I take him to be a splendid fellow, and his merits so exceedingly rare that the like of him could only be seen in his mirror. And anyone trying to imitate him would be nothing but a shadow of him.

*Taw* : is a nautical term, applied to a ship which moves unsteadily.

*Dearth* : dearness, value.

*Semblable* : likeness.

*Umbrage* : shadow.

l. 123. *Concernancy* : meaning.

l. 124. *More rawer* : inferior.

ll. 126–127. Can't you understand your own jargon, when someone else uses it? You can if you try.

l. 136. *Would . . . me* : would not be much to my credit.

l. 142. *For his weapon* : with regard to his skill in using his weapon.

*Imputation* : reputation.

- l. 143. *Meed* : merit.  
 l. 148. *Imponed* : staked.  
 l. 150. *Assigns* : appurtenances.
- Hangers* : straps by which the sword was attached to the girdle.
- l. 151. *Carriages* : hangers, as Osric later explains.  
 ll. 151-152 : *Responsive . . . hilts* : thoroughly in keeping with the hilts.
- l. 153. *Liberal conceit* : charming design.  
 l. 155. *Margent* : explanation.  
 l. 158. *German* : relative.  
 l. 159. *Carry cannon* : since carriages are only suitable to gun-carriages.
- l. 174. *The breathing . . . me* : the time at which I usually take my exercise.
- ll. 186-187. The lapwing is said, when hatched, to run off with part of its shell still sticking to it. Horatio means, "This youth is in a tremendous hurry to report to the king."
- l. 188. *Comply with* : observe formalities towards.  
 l. 190. *Drossy* : frivolous.  
 l. 191. *Outward . . . encounter* : veneer of good breeding.  
 l. 192. *Yesty collection* : frothy way of talking.
- ll. 194-195. *And do . . . out* : You have only to test them thoroughly and they collapse like a burst bubble.
- l. 215. *Gain-giving* : misgiving.  
 l. 218. *Repair* : coming.  
 l. 228. *This presence* : those present.  
 l. 231. *Exception* : resentment, ill-feeling.  
 l. 241. Let my assurance that I had no intention of doing you an injury.
- l. 244. *In nature* : so far as my own feelings are concerned.  
 l. 246. *In my . . . honour* : with regard to the question of my honour.
- ll. 248-250. Until I have been assured by some authority on matters of etiquette that I can accept your overtures and keep my name unstained.
- l. 257. *Stick fiery off* : shine out brilliantly.  
 l. 269. *Quit* : requites, i.e. by delivering a hit.  
 l. 272. *Union* : pearl.  
 l. 275. *Kettle* : kettle-drum.  
 l. 299. *Make a wanton* : are treating me too tenderly.

- I. 317. *Unbated* : with no button on it.
- I. 326. *Is thy union here?* : Is this the pearl you spoke of?
- I. 328. *Tempered* : concocted.
- I. 336. *Fell sergeant* : civil officer of the law.
- I. 341. *An antique Roman* : i.e. I would prefer death to a life which would be a disgrace.
- I. 355. *Election* : succession to the crown.
- II. 357-358. *With the . . . solicited* : together with the events, great and small, which have led me to do what I have done.
- I. 364. *This . . . havoc* : the sight of these dead speaks of merciless slaughter.
- I. 375. *Jump* : promptly.
- I. 392. From the mouth of one (Hamlet) whose support will ensure you that of others.
- I. 397. *Been put on* : been made king.

## APPENDIX

### I. THE LIFE OF SHAKESPEARE

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE was born in 1564 at Stratford-on-Avon. His father, one of the leading citizens of the town, was a glover who also traded in agricultural produce and possibly did some farming. It is assumed that he gave his son the ordinary education of a boy of his class at the local grammar school. Nothing is definitely known of the early life of the dramatist, however, until his marriage at the age of eighteen to Anne Hathaway, a woman some eight years older than himself. About 1584 he left Stratford and came to London. Here he must soon have joined a company of players, but there is no record of his activities until 1592, in which year it appears from a satirical comment made on him by Robert Greene that he was becoming well known as a playwright. His first published work, the poem *Venus and Adonis*, appeared in 1593; it was followed by *Lucrece* in the next year. Both these poems were dedicated to the Earl of Southampton. We next hear of him as a member of the Lord Chamberlain's Company of actors (who became "the King's men" after James's accession), and he probably remained in association with them for the rest of his working life. From 1599 the company occupied the Globe Theatre on the Bankside in Southwark. As an actor Shakespeare is said to have taken the parts of Adam in *As You Like It* and the Ghost in *Hamlet*. As a playwright he was the mainstay of the company; for about fifteen years he provided them on the average with two plays a year. His growing prosperity was indicated by his purchase, in 1597, of New Place, one of the largest houses in Stratford. About 1610 he left London and went to live as a retired gentleman at his Stratford home. He died there in 1616.

## HAMLET

### 2. THE ORDER OF THE PLAYS

In the collected edition of Shakespeare's plays published in 1623 no indication was given of the dates when they were first produced. Even in the case of the previously issued Quartos of some of the separate plays the dates on the title-pages are not to be taken as those of the earliest productions. The dating of Shakespeare's works is therefore a matter for conjecture based on such indirect evidence as is available. The following list gives an order which would be generally accepted :—

1590–1596

*Henry VI*, Pts. I, II, and III  
*Richard III*  
*Comedy of Errors*  
*Titus Andronicus*  
*Taming of the Shrew*  
*Two Gentlemen of Verona*  
*Love's Labour's Lost*  
*Romeo and Juliet*  
*Richard II*  
*Midsummer Night's Dream*

1596–1600

*King John*  
*Merchant of Venice*  
*Henry IV*, Pts. I and II  
*Much Ado About Nothing*  
*Henry V*  
*Julius Caesar*  
*Merry Wives of Windsor*  
*As You Like It*  
*Twelfth Night*

1600–1608

*Hamlet*  
*Troilus and Cressida*  
*All's Well that Ends Well*  
*Measure for Measure*  
*Othello*

## APPENDIX

*Macbeth*  
*King Lear*  
*Antony and Cleopatra*  
*Coriolanus*  
*Timon of Athens*

1608-1613

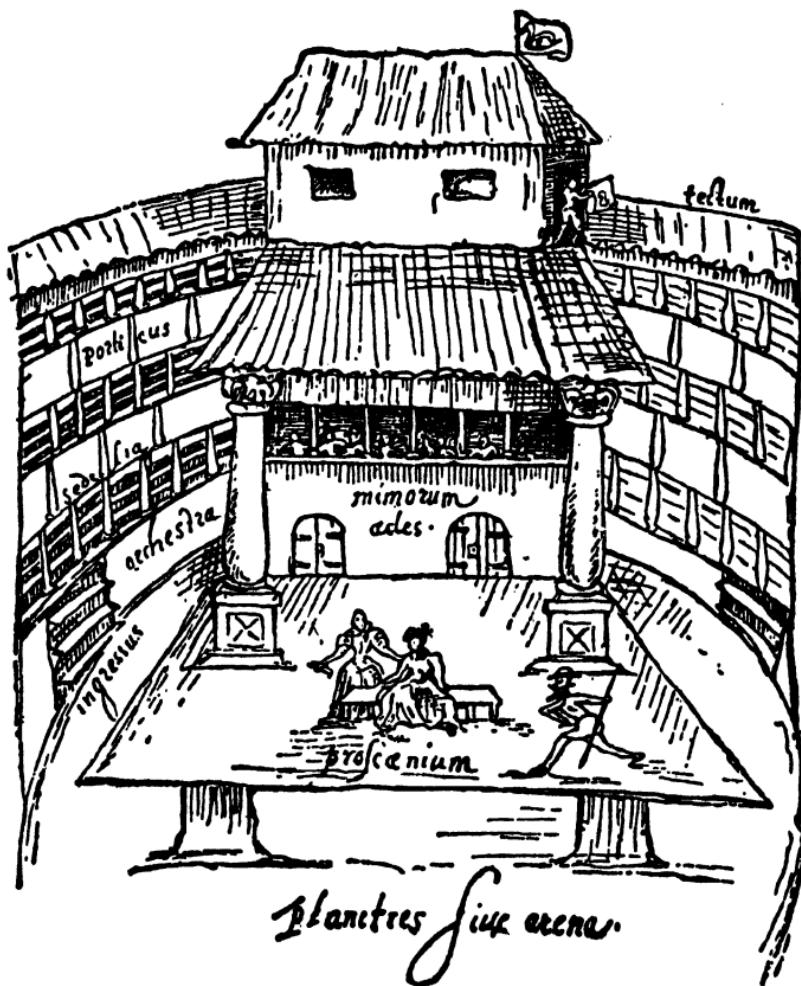
*Pericles*  
*Cymbeline*  
*Winter's Tale*  
*Tempest*  
*Henry VIII*  
*Two Noble Kinsmen*

### 3. THE ELIZABETHAN THEATRE

Shakespeare's plays were originally acted under conditions very different from those of to-day. Playhouses were new institutions—the first of them had been built in Shoreditch in 1576—and the technique of play-production was in its infancy. Moreover, as the first theatres were by no means like those we know in plan and construction, the dramatists necessarily employed methods that would seem strange to their present-day successors.

In general form the public theatres of Shakespeare's time resembled the galleried inn-yards in which companies of actors had previously set up a temporary stage for their performances. The stage was a rectangular platform projecting into the "yard," which was open to the sky. There were no seats on the floor around the stage : the "groundlings" stood and enclosed the actors on three sides. More expensive accommodation was provided in tiers of galleries running right round the building. The topmost gallery had a thatched roof. Fashionable young gallants were allowed seats on the stage itself. The plays were performed in daylight, usually in the afternoon. There were some differences between the "public" and the "private" theatres: the private theatres, like the Blackfriars, were roofed, used artificial light, and were attended by a better-class audience. No painted scenery was used ; but some indication of the place represented might be given by such movable properties

# HAMLET



THE DE WITT DRAWING OF THE SWAN THEATRE

## APPENDIX

as a bed or a single small tree symbolising a wood. The stage itself was sheltered by a roof. In the floor there was a trap-door through which ghosts and apparitions rose and descended. This is the explanation of the stage direction "Descends" in connection with the apparitions in *Macbeth*, IV. i. The main stage could not, of course, be curtained off.

At the back of the platform were two doors through which the actors entered. In the space between these doors was hung a curtain which, when drawn, revealed an inner stage. In this recess Ferdinand and Miranda would have been shown playing their game of chess, and the play-scene in *Hamlet* would have been performed. It could serve also for Lear's hovel, Prospero's cell, or the tomb of the Capulets.

Above the inner stage was a balcony forming part of the lowest gallery running round the house. This upper space could be used for the sleeping-rooms of Macbeth's castle, for Juliet's balcony, or the room in Shylock's house from which Jessica throws down the casket to Lorenzo. The stage direction "Enter Above" frequently found in the old texts means that the actors are to come on to this gallery.

The De Witt drawing of the Swan Theatre, here reproduced, is the only clear contemporary pictorial evidence of what one of the Elizabethan playhouses looked like. Even this is probably incorrect in some of the details. The original rough sketch of the theatre made by John de Witt for his *Observationes Londinenses* is lost, but a copy of it made by Arend van Buchell of Utrecht survives.

With regard to the actors who performed on the Elizabethan stage, all that need be said is that they included no women in their companies. Female parts were played by boys. At one time a company consisting entirely of boys—members of the choir of the Chapel Royal—was very popular.

The peculiar conditions of the Elizabethan theatre must be taken into account when we are examining Shakespeare's stage-craft. They explain, for instance, the frequent change of scene which is a characteristic of the plays of the time. The audiences did not demand realism: they were prepared to use their imagination and accept the simplest symbolism as a means of suggesting the place of action. The extreme example of Shakespeare's free treatment of place and time is seen in *Antony and Cleopatra*, where he has a

## HAMLET

succession of very short scenes located in a variety of widely separated places. The typical modern dramatist would not deal with his material in this way. He works with the knowledge that a change in the supposed place demands a change in scenery, which takes time and may cause an undesirable break in the action. Moreover, every additional "set" required adds considerably to the expense of production. There is good reason, therefore, why a modern play should differ considerably in shape from an Elizabethan play.

The absence of scenery and lighting had other minor but interesting results. The dramatist was compelled, for example, to introduce into the dialogue indications of time and place that would now be superfluous. A famous instance occurs in *Julius Caesar*. In the Orchard Scene the audience is to suppose that it is night. Brutus therefore opens with the remark :—

I cannot, by the progress of the stars,  
Give guess how near to day.

And throughout the scene the darkness of night is insisted on by the speakers. Similarly, the second act of *Macbeth* begins at night. Hence, when Banquo enters, he is preceded by a torch-bearer, and he talks about the moon and the stars. Again, the description of Macbeth's castle put into the mouth of Duncan and Banquo is introduced not merely for the sake of the lyrical touch, very welcome at this point, but in order to give the spectators information which could not be conveyed to the eye by a stage-picture of a castle.

Since the actors were playing on an open platform-stage, they had to aim at different effects of grouping from those obtained in the modern theatre, where the proscenium acts like a picture-frame entirely separating performers from spectators. Processions and dancing were freely introduced, and the elaborate costumes worn by the actors gave colour to the scene. The fact that the performers were immediately surrounded by spectators obviated to some extent the difficulty experienced nowadays in speaking the soliloquies and the asides that were a regular part of the old stage convention. There was an intimacy between players and audience

## APPENDIX

that made it seem not unnatural for a character to allow his private thoughts to be overheard.

Owing to the absence of a curtain for the main stage, the dramatist had to take special measures when he required a scene to end with a definite break in the action. He had to arrange for all his characters to leave the stage. The problem was most serious at the end of the play. The final scene of *Hamlet* illustrates the difficulty. A modern playwright would bring down the curtain at the climax, that is, when Horatio, bending over the body of his dead friend, says :—

Good night, sweet prince,  
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest.

But, on the Elizabethan stage, if the play had ended here, the dead would have had to rise and walk off. To obviate this absurdity, Fortinbras and the English ambassadors are brought in, and the scene is prolonged for Fortinbras to say :—

Let four captains  
Bear Hamlet, like a soldier, to the stage . . .

There is a dead march, and the soldiers carry the bodies of Hamlet and the other dead off the stage.

It may be noted, finally, that the first theatres were used not only for dramatic performances but also for bear-baiting, cock-fighting, and athletic contests. The public liking for exhibitions of bodily skill to some extent influenced the fare provided by the playwrights. Shakespeare, for example, indulged his audiences with the wrestling match in *As You Like It*. This was a genuine contest. Similarly, the broadsword fight at the conclusion of *Macbeth* was a real trial of skill between combatants accustomed to their weapons.



